

Singing Histories: London

A songbook produced by Sing London with the English Folk Dance and Song Society

TEACHERS' NOTES: Key Stages 2, 3 & 4

Application of Songs across the Curriculum

These notes are designed to be used in conjunction with the *Singing Histories: London* songbook. They explore the relevance of the songs in the context of the wider curriculum for key stages 2, 3 & 4. Suggestions are made as to which songs are best used to illustrate different aspects of the curriculum and how the songs exemplify these areas, certain topics being more relevant than others at different stages.

Singing Histories: London is a unique and rich educational resource for teachers of many subjects. It offers a diverse range of opportunities to explore the curriculum further through the material and challenge students with the way song has historically been used as both a literary tool and social commentary.

The *Singing Histories: London* songbook is more than just a book or a catalogue of songs; it is a musical insight into almost every aspect of London throughout the ages. Through the use of folk songs both modern and old, and accompanying notes, we can delve into the culture, locations, emotions and events of this city's past.

Written 'for the people, by the people', folk songs deal with reality in an unparalleled way. What is presented here are workshop suggestions as to how to use these songs as the ingredients or starting point in the creation of lesson plans or learners' own work.

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English

KS 2 - *Hopping Down in Kent*

KS 3 - *Wild & Wicked Youth*

KS 4 - *Press Gang, London Steamer*

Language, regional dialects, colloquialisms, rhyme, metaphor, perspectives and literary point of view, evolution and degradation of language, word origins, structure of verse, alliteration, storytelling dynamics, song writing

Humanities, Citizenship, RE

KS 2 & 3 - *What Will We Do if We Have Got No Money*

KS 4 - *A Maiden Came From London Town, Tower of London*

Poverty, homelessness, migration (for work, poverty, hunger, climate), penal system, death penalty issues, Human rights, death and social separation, gender studies, women in power, prostitution, alcoholism, community bonds, police system, river management, Thames tributaries

History

KS 2, 3 & 4 - *London Wherryman, London Steamer, Wild and Wicked Youth, London Lights, London Bridge is Broken Down, Hopping Down in Kent, Lavender, Press Gang, Tower of London, Maybe it's Because I'm a Londoner*

Transportation around the country; canals and waterways – cultural impact. Trade routes, agricultural trade and work, war, military power, naval power, the British empire, class distinction, social uprising, advent of gas then electric lighting, welfare system, industrial revolution, agricultural revolution

Arts & Design

KS 2 & 3 - *Baskets and Chairs*

KS 4 - *London Lights*

Furniture craft, visual documentation of social events – Hogarth, etchings and woodcuts used in broadside trade

Physical Health and Wellbeing

KS 2 & 3 - *Lavender*

KS 4 - *A Maiden Came From London, Wild Whiskey*

Sexually transmitted diseases, herbal and old medicine, drugs and substance abuse

Scientific and Technological Understanding

KS 2 - *London Bridge is Broken Down*

KS 3 - *London Steamer*

KS 4 - *London Lights*

Advancements in travel, sailing ships, steamboats, bridge building, structural engineering, steel industry, the piston, changes in manufacturing, recording processes; wax cylinders to tape to digital, photography to cinema, printing techniques – broadside trade and printing press explosion.

Dance

KS 2 - *How Many Miles to London, Hopping down in Kent.*

Dance traditions, expression of narrative through movement, tableaux vivants, regional dance traditions and motifs, clapping games, role of dance socially, clogging from the mills, where dance was practised socially.

Suggested Exercises and Questions to Develop

- *Role-play*: using a song, select or create two characters within a chosen song. In pairs discuss issues within the song's subject.
- *Song Writing*: using the melody and phrase length of any song, write an update of that story in contemporary terms. Incorporate stylistics and literary motifs that exist in any song in the book.
- *Creative Writing*: This can focus on characters within songs, newspaper reports, letter writing, debates on issues, diaries or blogs on events. Describe or expand on the circumstances that may have led up to the events described in the chosen song.
- Put the songs into a possible chronological order. Why might this be harder than it looks? Evolution of song and the embellishments they gain as they pass down the generations.
- How have these songs crafted the identities of today? How has our current social and political climate been affected by themes mentioned in these songs?
- *Storyboards for Songs*: drawn, painted or interpreted. Image updates from the illustrations (then and now), photographic reportage of a current narrative based upon that of a song.

- Explore *traditional crafts* and how design has evolved over time.
- Explore the cultural and historical circumstances around the *discovery of the Americas* and how syphilis had such a devastating effect on Western Europe, similarly how the colonisers cross infected the native peoples with western diseases.
- Explore how *developments in medicine* evolved, with herbal lore entering into a commercial and scientific realm
- Chronicle the development of the *advertisement of goods*. Investigate how music has been used to sell products and how printing has impacted on commercial trade.
- Explore the *construction industry*, the building of the nation through roads, bridges, advent of steel and the industrial revolution's effect on the country's social, environmental and cultural infrastructure.

For more information on workshops, publications and activities run by the EFDSS please contact:

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More folk song resources for children and teachers:
www.funwithfolk.com | www.teachingfolksong.com



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