



Australian History Mysteries and the National History Curriculum

In *STUDIES* 3/2010 we suggested how one of the 'history mysteries' on the new website **www.australianhistorymysteries.info** could be used in the classroom.

This mystery looked at the depression and asked students to 'create' a family (following historical evidence) and have that family respond to a number of issues that arose at the time.

Here we provide an overview and summary of the other mysteries that can be explored on that site, and show how they fit the National History Curriculum.

WHAT IS

www.australianhistorymysteries.info?

www.australianhistorymysteries.info is a subscription-based website containing the rich content provided in the *Australian History Mysteries* resource kits. It contains each of the videos and case study units of work from the kits, as well as exciting multimedia interactive modules related to a number of these case studies. Subscribing to this site will enable teachers and their students to gain access to this material seamlessly and will also ensure access to new content as it becomes available.

AIMS

The *Australian History Mysteries* case studies are designed to stimulate students' interest in and engagement with aspects of their history and heritage, and to develop the skills needed in pursuing historical studies. They have been designed for use at a middle secondary level but teachers will find the materials and ideas adaptable for both higher and lower levels. Each case study contains a wide range of primary and secondary source evidence, including museum objects, national archival collections and historic sites. They are relevant to the new national history curriculum with its emphasis on inquiry learning and historical skills development.

THE PRODUCERS

Australian History Mysteries has been developed by the National Museum of Australia and Ryebuck Media Pty Ltd. Both organisations are committed to providing excellent resources that can help to bring history alive in the classroom.

ACCESSING THE SITE

By subscribing to this website users will be able to access:

- high quality videos (MP4 and Windows Media) for each case study which introduce the mystery, 'visit the scene' of the events and set out clearly the nature of the investigation
- inquiry learning units of work (pdf) for each case study containing photocopyable evidence and classroom activities
- interactive modules (flash) for a number of case studies designed to further explore aspects of these case studies in exciting, stimulating ways and offer a different learning experience for visual learners
- *STUDIES* Magazine curriculum units (pdf) that are relevant to the respective history mysteries
- a 'What is History?' introductory game (flash) called *Ghost Town* which is designed to help students understand and weigh up the relative merits of historical evidence.

For a free preview unit and to subscribe to the site go to

www.australianhistorymysteries.info





| Title | <i>Who 'discovered' Australia?</i> | <i>What was the life of a female convict really like?</i> | <i>The Eureka Rebellion – could you have stopped it from happening?</i> |
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| National History Curriculum Connection | Develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. | The experiences of slaves, convicts and free settlers upon departure, their journey abroad, and their reactions on arrival, including the Australian experience. Changes in the way of life of a group(s) of people who moved to Australia in this period, such as free settlers on the frontier in Australia. | Key events and ideas in the development of Australian self-government and democracy. |
| Overview of the unit | Students look at a variety of evidence to determine who 'discovered' Australia. In doing so they have to address the issue of what 'discover' means and what the implications of different definitions, or elements of an overall definition, are. Students are introduced to a range of 'discoverers', including Aboriginal people, Baijini gypsies, Chinese explorers, Macassan fishermen, Portuguese seamen, Dutch merchants, James Cook and Matthew Flinders. | Students are involved in a detailed investigation of the Ross Female Factory site in Tasmania. They 'become' archaeologists and find a variety of objects relating to convict life. They then have to draw on a variety of other sources of evidence to help them 'interrogate' and interpret each object, and to discover what it tells them about convict life and conditions. | Students take on the persona of the people involved in the Eureka Rebellion and have to make crucial decisions. They are given choices and know that consequences will flow from their decisions. In this exercise students see that at every point in the story there were alternatives that might have been available, but were, for whatever reason, not taken. It engages students with some key historical ideas — empathy, causation, values, motivation and consequences. |
| Inquiry and evidence worksheets | Investigative activities 1-2: <i>Setting up the concept of 'discovery'</i> Investigative activities 3-7: <i>Evidence and inquiry pages for investigating these possible 'discoverers':</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Australians Baijini Portuguese James Cook Chinese Macassans Dutch Matthew Flinders Conclusions and Reflections | Investigative activity 1: <i>Introducing archaeology</i> Investigative activities 2-8: <i>Evidence and inquiry pages for carrying out a sequenced site study:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where? When? What? How? Why? Conclusions and Reflections | Investigative activities 1, 3: <i>Introducing the concept of 'rebellion'</i> Investigative activity 2: <i>What happened at Eureka?</i> Investigative activity 4: <i>How do you respond to these events at Eureka?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A visit from Governor Hotham Murder at Bentley's Hotel Diggers protest Attack on the Eureka Stockade Goldfield reforms? Swearing freedom under the Southern Cross 'Where's your licence?' Corruption on the goldfields Army reinforcements arrive Trial of the Eureka rebels Conclusions and Reflections |
| Video visit | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the possible 'Mahogany ship' site. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the female convict sites at Ross and Hobart. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the site of the Eureka Rebellion. |
| Interactive supplement | Build a timeline for the discovery of Australia | Carry out an archaeological dig at the site of a female convict factory | Can you make decisions that will stop the Eureka Stockade from happening? |



| Title | <i>What happened in a frontier conflict near Broome in 1864?</i> | <i>Was Ned Kelly a hero or a villain?</i> | <i>How will your family be affected by the Great War?</i> |
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| National History Curriculum Connection | The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. | Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century. | The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia (such as the use of propaganda to influence the civilian population, the changing role of women, the conscription debate). |
| Overview of the unit | Students investigate an incident of frontier conflict in Western Australia and are challenged to consider different interpretations of the event. They carry out an inquiry, calling witnesses and critically analysing the evidence presented. They also investigate a memorial, called the 'Explorers Memorial', which carries both the original inscription from 1913 and a later interpretation of events by Aboriginal people from 1994. In doing so they experience how history 'hears' and 'silences' voices and how people use the past in the present. | Students investigate how people can interpret one set of facts very differently to come up with contrasting 'Ned as hero' and 'Ned as villain' interpretations. They then put Ned Kelly on trial for the event that set his fate — the killing of the three police at Stringybark Creek in 1878 by becoming witnesses, presenting evidence and being challenged about that evidence. In doing so they confront one of the icons of Australian history and decide for themselves the place of that person in their own sense of their national identity. | In this unit students 'create' a family and community, and then explore how the people involved react to a series of situations that develop during the war. The unit provides a practical classroom-based way of developing knowledge, understanding and empathy while formulating hypotheses that can then be tested in a real local community, or at a state or national level. |
| Inquiry and evidence worksheets | Investigative activities 1-2: Comparing inscriptions on a memorial Investigative activity 3: Holding an inquiry into the event Investigative activity 4: Four representations of an event Conclusions and Reflections | Investigative activities 1-2: What is a 'hero'? What is a 'villain'? Investigative activity 3: Who was Ned Kelly? Investigative activity 4: Three representations of Ned Kelly Investigative activity 5: Putting Ned Kelly on trial Conclusions and Reflections | Investigative activity 1: Understanding a key concept and forming initial hypotheses Investigative activities 2 and 3: Creating your family Investigative activity 4: Examining and responding to key information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The news from Gallipoli Recruiting War memorials Casualties and recruiting campaigns The economy Patriotic activities Conscription campaign Investigative activity 5: Community meeting Investigative activity 6: Representing this at the NMA |
| Video visit | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the site of the controversial memorial in Fremantle. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit many key Kelly country sites. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit a local community to find echoes of the war still in that community. |
| Interactive supplement | Can you make some key decisions in Australian history? | Can you stop Ned wrecking the train of police at Glenrowan? | It is 1916 — Do you join the RSL? And if so, what sort of organisation do you create? |



| Title | <i>What happened at Coniston in 1928?</i> | <i>How bad was the Great Depression?</i> | <i>What happened to 'Smithy'?</i> |
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| National History Curriculum Connection | Develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. | Develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. | Develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. |
| Overview of the unit | In 1928 at least 31 and possibly more than one hundred Indigenous people were killed near Alice Springs after a local dingo trapper was found dead. A Government Inquiry found the killings were justified. Were they? How can such a terrible event have happened? Students investigate the evidence to try to establish the facts, and to understand the attitudes, values and clash of cultures that made these events possible. | This unit provides a way of introducing students to the social impacts of the Great Depression on Australia in a simple, entertaining and challenging way. Its aim is to help students be more aware of the variety of experiences and the complexity of the factors involved in determining how people were affected by the Depression. It does this by using an empathetic approach to the period, while still tackling it in a historically accurate way. | Students look at the contribution and significance of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith to Australian national identity. They explore his war record and then his 'barnstorming' feats before establishing the aviation records for which he became a national hero. The evidence asks students to compare image with the reality and raises questions about how we should remember and commemorate national figures. |
| Inquiry and evidence worksheets | <p>Investigative activity 1: Understanding a key concept</p> <p>Investigative activity 2: Visiting Coniston</p> <p>Investigative activity 3: Examining key evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information • Map • Evidence of Police Constable Murray • Evidence of pastoralists and missionaries • Hearing Aboriginal accounts • Coming to a conclusion • Meeting the people • Timeline of police expeditions <p>Investigative activity 4: Representation and commemoration — by memorial, ceremony, museum</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Creating your own representation</p> | <p>Investigative activity 1: What is your image of the Depression?</p> <p>Investigative activity 2: Creating a family during the Depression</p> <p>Investigative activity 3: Visiting the scene</p> <p>Investigative activity 4: Responding as a family to the Depression</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Understanding a media image of the Depression</p> <p>Investigative activity 6: A museum image of the Depression</p> | <p>Investigative activity 1: What is a 'hero'?</p> <p>Investigative activity 2-4: Meeting Smithy</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Finding Smithy through evidence</p> <p>Investigative activity 6: What happened to Smithy?</p> <p>Investigative activity 7: Why did this occur?</p> |
| Video visit | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the site of the Coniston killings. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit local sites of significance for the Depression in a local community. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit sites associated with the legend of Smithy. |
| Interactive supplement | Bells Falls Gorge – Virtual exploration of a museum exhibition on a massacre | Not applicable for this unit | Can you solve the mystery of what happened to 'Smithy'? |



| Title | <i>Why did the Government lie about the bombing of Darwin?</i> | <i>Why were former enemies able to work together successfully on the Snowy Mountains Scheme?</i> | <i>What are the mysteries of Maralinga?</i> |
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| National History Curriculum Connection | The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front at a local and national level (for example significant events such as the bombing of Darwin). | The waves of post-World War II migration to Australia, including the influence of significant world events. | The impact of World War II on the emergence of the United States as a major world power and on Australia's alliance with the US. |
| Overview of the unit | Students investigate one of the most significant episodes in Australia's Second World War experience. Why was the bombing of Darwin 'hushed up' by the government? Was there a warning that was ignored? Was there looting and cowardice by soldiers? Was 19 February 1942 Australia's 'great day of shame'? Students visit the sites, analyse the maps, interrogate witnesses, sequence the events, and come to their own conclusions. | The Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme is always presented as the beginnings of, and a triumph for, multiculturalism in Australia. If it was, how were former enemies able to work together apparently so successfully in a new community? How were tensions, even hatreds, overcome? Focusing on some specific case studies, students investigate a number of possible explanations and draw their own conclusions about the scheme. | Students explore an important Australian Cold War event that is often overlooked in Australian history: the testing of atomic weapons in Australia in the 1950s. They ask what it reveals about the Australia in which it occurred and in doing so explore both their own values, and develop an empathetic understanding of the values and attitudes of Australian society during the Cold War. Students also investigate the effects of nuclear testing on Aboriginal people from that area and ongoing debates about responsibility and compensation since that time. |
| Inquiry and evidence worksheets | <p>Investigative activity 1: 'Fire!' What do you do?</p> <p>Investigative activity 2-3: Images of war</p> <p>Investigative activity 4: Holding an inquiry</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Was it right for the government to lie?</p> <p>Investigative activity 6: Creating images in wartime</p> | <p>Investigative activity 1: How do you solve this problem in the school?</p> <p>Investigative activities 2-4: Understanding the background to and visiting the Scheme</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Making a decision: Why were the former enemies able to work together?</p> <p>Investigative activity 6: The Snowy Scheme — a case of multiculturalism or assimilation?</p> <p>Investigative activity 7: How is the Snowy Scheme represented in the NMA?</p> | <p>Investigative activities 1-2: What is your image of 'the bomb'?</p> <p>Investigative activity 3: Preparing group reports on Australia in the 1950s/60s and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political decision-making • attitudes to development of nuclear power • attitudes to nuclear weapons • attitudes to defence • attitudes to safety and health • attitudes to local Aboriginal inhabitants <p>Investigative activity 4: Outcomes and today</p> |
| Video visit | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the site of the Darwin attack. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit sites in the Snowy Scheme. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit sites associated with Australia's atomic testing and research program. |
| Interactive supplement | Can you defend Darwin from the Japanese attack? | Not applicable for this unit | Explore a Cold War timeline |



| Title | <i>How have Indigenous Australians' rights changed over time?</i> | <i>Can you be a Vietnam War 'myth buster'?</i> | <i>What happened to Juanita Nielsen?</i> |
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| National History Curriculum Connection | The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote; 1967 Referendum | The impact of at least ONE world event or development and its significance for Australia, such as the Vietnam War and Indochinese refugees | The growth and influence of the environment movement within Australia and overseas, and developments in ideas about the environment |
| Overview of the unit | Students explore the evidence to critically discuss the issue of Australians' attitudes to Indigenous rights and racial equality. They explore how the apparent racism revealed by the 1965 Freedom Ride in places such as Walgett and Moree can be reconciled with the overwhelmingly positive example of the 1967 referendum. Or how the apparent hostility of many towards the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972 can be reconciled with the awarding of equal pay to Aboriginal pastoral workers in 1966 and the adoption of the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975. The case study also compares the Yirrkala people's claim to legal ownership of their land in 1971 and the Mabo case in 1992. | There are many aspects of the Vietnam War that are popularly accepted. This unit puts them to the test. Did Whitlam bring the troops home? Were returning soldiers splattered with paint? Did Australians oppose the war? Were protesters just scruffy university radicals? Were soldiers forced to go to Vietnam? The unit introduces such themes, and lets students be the 'myth busters' by providing them with evidence that will support or refute each claim. They make the decisions! | Students investigate the murder mystery of Juanita Nielsen, a prominent Sydney activist in the 1970s, who opposed the development of the historic Victoria Street in inner Sydney. They must decide who killed her and why. The focus of the case study is to use her death to put the society of the time under the microscope — the green bans, union rivalries, political corruption, a powerful criminal presence, police involvement, clashing egos and an emerging environmentalism movement. |
| Inquiry and evidence worksheets | <p>Investigative activity 1-2: Focusing on rights</p> <p>Investigative activity 3: Make eight decisions</p> <p>Investigative activity 4: 1967 Referendum case study</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: 'Mutual obligation' case study</p> | <p>Investigative activity 1: What is a 'myth'? Interrogating three famous images from the Vietnam War</p> <p>Investigative activity 2: Discovering people's images of the Vietnam War</p> <p>Investigative activity 3: Visiting the scene of events</p> <p>Investigative activity 4: Testing evidence about some myths of the war:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Australia joined the war • Pop star Normie Rowe was illegally conscripted for propaganda purposes • Prime Minister Whitlam brought the troops home • Most Australians opposed the war and conscription • Attitudes to the war were changed by the 'living room' war • The Vietnam War led to a wave of 'boat people' • Australian soldiers were abused and rejected on their return from Vietnam • The photograph used in the Vietnam War Memorial in Canberra typifies the Australian experience <p>Investigative activity 5: How does the NMA represent this event?</p> | <p>Investigative activity 1: Create a biography — by asking 20 questions</p> <p>Investigative activities 2-3: Meeting Juanita Nielsen</p> <p>Investigative activity 4: 'Becoming' a witness</p> <p>Investigative activity 5: Questioning these witnesses</p> <p>Investigative activity 6: Your editor's instructions</p> |
| Video visit | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit Moree to see where this significant part of the Freedom Ride took place. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit a variety of local sites associated with Australia's Vietnam War experience. | Students see a variety of visual evidence, and visit the scene of the mysterious disappearance of Juanita Nielsen. |
| Interactive supplement | How did Australians vote in the 1967 Referendum? | | Who killed Juanita Nielsen? A cold case investigation |

