

Seeing it for real:

An investigation into the effectiveness of theatre and theatre techniques in museums

Executive Summary and Abridged Report

*Research funded by
The Arts and Humanities Research Board*



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The title of the report

'Seeing it for real' is taken from the response of one of the children at Oswald Road Junior School who had taken part in the 'theatre pathway' through the People's History Museum.

Asked what had most impressed her about the visit, two months later, she said it was the chance to see the *'real thing'*, which was much better than *'just being told'* or looking at photographs which were *'not the same as going to see it for real life'*. Her comment reflected a view common to many of the children interviewed at all participating schools at both museums, including many of those following the 'non-theatre' as well as the 'theatre' pathways: it expresses their enthusiasm for the whole museum experience, but especially the live performances, interactive displays, object-handling and role-play activities.

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Seeing it for real:

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Executive Summary

i. Introducing the report

During 2001/2, a research team based at the University of Manchester took forward an innovative research programme to examine the effectiveness of theatre and theatre techniques in museums. ***Seeing it for real*** sets out the methodology and findings of the project, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB).

This research forms the second phase of what is intended as a three phase programme. ***Seeing it for real*** describes Phase Two in detail, comparing the experiences of children from four schools at two museums. To provide background, the report also outlines Phase One, a small-scale pilot project based at the Royal Armouries, Tower of London, which informed the development of Phase Two.

ii. Why now?

Theatre is increasingly widely used as an interpretative and educational medium in museums, but until now it has been omitted from most major museum education reports and evaluative studies. Large-scale theatre programmes in museums are expensive to establish and maintain, and there have been professional objections to its appropriateness as an interpretative medium. Without any kind of evidence of lasting effectiveness, such theatre programmes can be difficult to justify and sustain.

So the time was ripe for a research programme which would not seek merely to justify the effectiveness of museum theatre techniques in isolation, but which would contrast the effectiveness of museum theatre against the best traditional museum education techniques. It would use strict comparative methods, and assess the strengths and the weaknesses of both forms of interpretation.

What is at stake is the very nature and purpose of learning in museums. Who is responsible for research and interpretation in the museum? Given that neutral interpretation is neither possible nor, arguably, desirable, whose voices are heard in the museum? Should the museum's narratives exceed the 'stories' told by its collections, in order to fill in gaps in the collections and/or to offer alternative points of view? Should museums promote affective, as well as cognitive, learning in order to develop their publics' understanding of issues as well as facts? Although these questions lie outside the scope of this project, they constitute a highly topical professional and intellectual context for research.

iii. Our audience

This report is submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board, which has generously funded Phase Two of the research. It will be of relevance to anyone working in, planning, managing, directing or funding museum education - and to anyone with an interest in on-site theatre or live interpretation at museums, galleries or historic, natural or cultural sites.

iv. How was the research structured?

Phase One was led by a single consultant, who teamed a class from the Hermitage School in Tower Hamlets with the Education Department of the Royal Armouries and an enactor from the professional live interpretation company Past Pleasures. A single class was split in two, both halves working to a common set of learning objectives on the subject of the life of Anne Boleyn, but communicated in very different ways: one group's experience involved meeting Anne Boleyn's 'cousin', and the other's a guided tour and a slide show focusing on Anne's life. A pre-experience visit established a base-line for the children's existing knowledge and two post-experience visits established their recall of the experience, both immediately after it and several weeks later. The children's question and answer responses and artistic work were recorded and analysed. The recommendations from this pilot informed the structure of Phase Two of the research.

In **Phase Two** the research team increased to four: two academic staff from the University of Manchester, the consultant who led Phase One and a PhD-level research assistant specifically recruited for the project.

That the Tower of London is both an historic site and a museum greatly increased the number of variable factors during the analysis of Phase One. The Phase Two team therefore opted to concentrate on a comparison between two museums - rather than on both a museum and an historic site, as had been originally planned. They selected museums with contrasting locations, collections and approaches to theatre techniques: the Pump House People's History Museum in Manchester, and the Imperial War Museum in London.

The team also decided to use two classes from each of the four schools involved, rather than splitting a single class from each. This encouraged the schools to participate - a challenge in the light of September 11 2001, when many school visits were cancelled - but slightly increased the variable factors from each school: for example, different teachers with different levels of interest, and sometimes a different set of timings for arrival and departure.

The schools involved ranged from an inner-London school with high levels of statemented and non-English First Language pupils, to a private girls' school in Oxford. They were:

The Pump House People's History Museum:

Oswald Road Junior School, Manchester
Medlock Primary School, Manchester

The Imperial War Museum:

The Hermitage Junior School, Tower Hamlets, London
Headington Junior School, Oxford

At the **Pump House People's History Museum**, both visits were on the theme of 1950s immigration from the Caribbean. The 'theatre' group of children encountered an enactor, in the person of 'Gabrielle', who offered a sophisticated performance presented in three scenes

spanning several decades. The use of this enactment is an established part of the museum's education provision. The 'non-theatre' group had a specially-developed guided tour and hands-on artefact handling session which was a variation of the museum's usual programme for schools.

The **Imperial War Museum** visit was themed around 1940s wartime Britain. The theatre group visited the 1940s House, linked to the Channel Four documentary series recreating family life during the war, and encountered an enactor in role as 'Muriel', a 1940s housewife. This was a relatively simple and much shorter performance than the Pump House People's History Museum's 'Gabrielle', but was at the same time more conversational in style and more directly related to its recreated environment. The non-theatre group had a visit based on a detailed 1940s model house, supplemented with some artefact handling. Both these experiences were part of the museum's established education programme.

As in Phase One, all schools were observed in advance of the visit to establish the children's baseline of existing knowledge using a question and answer session conducted by the teacher after consultation with the research team.

Post-visit 1 (PV1, immediately after the visit) research centred around oral, written and artistic responses from children at each of the schools.

Post-visit 2 (PV2, approx. eight weeks later) research focused on more detailed questioning of small groups of children from each class, as well as further written and artistic responses.

v. Analysing the responses

Defining 'effectiveness' in terms of museum theatre was one of the greatest challenges the project team faced. Phase One had focused largely on factual and historical recall as a means of establishing effectiveness, but the team felt strongly that recall was only one part of a multi-faceted experience which embraces affective as well as cognitive learning.

Responses were therefore analysed under seven **categories of pupil response**:

1. Experience: *what was the child's overall impression of the museum: the visit as a whole and its component parts?*

2. Recall: *did the child recollect key facts accurately and completely?*

3. Understanding: *did the child digest and process the information fully? did the child demonstrate a grasp of the whys and hows of what happened in the past?*

4. Connection: *did the child manage to connect and understand different elements of the museum experience and different events from the period?*

5. Surprise: *did the child express surprise over any aspect of the experience? Were preconceptions challenged?*

6. Ownership: *how did the experience encourage the child to relate personally to people and events of the period in question? Did the child show any evidence of emotional or imaginative empathy with the people of the time?*

7. Inspiration: *did the child show any evidence of their inspiration being fired or curiosity triggered?*

vi. Key findings and recommendations

Phase One was too small a project to establish findings in its own right, although some consistencies did seem to be emerging, especially in the children's artistic response to their experience at the Royal Armouries. Areas which Phase One suggested for particular emphasis during Phase Two were:

- Was there evidence of improved recollection of an experience where children had a theatre-based experience?
- Were differences in understanding evident between children who followed theatre and non-theatre pathways through the museums?

Phase Two was also limited (to two museums and four schools), but clearer patterns have emerged which will need to be more fully tested during Phase Three, in particular:

- Where the 'story' of the visit is delivered by an enactor through a strong linear narrative in the first person, both recollection and understanding are enhanced, both in the short and in the longer-term
- Where the visit consists of more fragmented elements assembled by the museum, without the organising function of a dramatic narrative, there appears to be more scope for children to construct their own meanings - and equally for them to misconnect elements of the story, leading to misunderstanding. This misunderstanding increases with time
- Theatre group children showed more tendency to empathise, especially with negative or problematic aspects of the period in question
- Each method is enhanced by the incorporation of hands-on activity: the children's recall of such activity was better than their recall of more passive activities such as guided tour and note-taking, a difference that became more marked over time
- Theatre group children showed more of a tendency to relate personally to the character representing the period in question than did the non-theatre group children
- Individual narrative can provide a powerful insight into the period in question, but is inevitably partial and may result in misunderstanding without wider educational support.

vii. Looking forward: next steps

The research team recommend that Phase Three should be broadened out, both in timescale and in groups and sites targeted. Over a three-year period, it would be possible, and valuable, to investigate not just at school groups but also at family learners and older learners, and not just at museums but also at historic sites.

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Report

(short version: without appendices)

Section 1. Background to the project

1.1 Research rationale

The rapidly expanding field of museum theatre may broadly be defined as:

the use of theatre and theatrical techniques as a means of mediating knowledge and understanding of the past in the context of museum education.

- It may take place in conventional museums or at historic sites
- It is generally presented by professional actors and/or interpreters, directly employed or commissioned by museums
- It can involve the performance of short plays or monologues based on historical events and materials exhibited on-site
- It can be an interactive event using performance, improvisation and role-play, tailored to the needs and capabilities of specific age groups of visiting schoolchildren
- It may be based around topics being studied by pupils as part of the National Curriculum
- It may be designed for family groups and/or the independent visitor.

Advocates of museum theatre world-wide are convinced of the educational benefit of this innovative interpretative tool. But at present its use is patchy: some museums depend on it, others still view it as inferior to more traditional forms of interpretation.

Barriers to the wider use of museum theatre are chiefly:

- lack of first hand experience of the genre
- the perception that it can distract and detract from the authenticity of the museum object or historical site
- lack of funding
- lack of recognition in recent reports and policy statements on museum education
- lack of formal, disinterested research into its efficacy.

This research attempts to address the last of these.

Phase Two was also intended to allow the research team to demonstrate the feasibility of a larger-scale research programme (Phase Three). This further programme would allow museum-based and site-based theatre, using both performance and interactive approaches, to be tested with a larger number and wider range of audiences. These would include not only schools but also independent (or 'drop-in') visitors within the context of lifelong learning, and over a longer time-scale.

For Phase Three, a three-year programme of research would also aim to:

- develop more sophisticated forms of evaluation
- advance the practice of museum theatre through collaboration in the creation of new forms of theatre-based interpretation, and foster mutually beneficial links with MA programmes in theatre studies, art gallery and museum studies and heritage studies.

1.2 The context for the research

1.2.1. Developments in museum education policy and practice

During the last twenty years, the role and status of education as an independent professional domain within museums and galleries has moved from the margin to the centre. No longer the 'poor relation' to the core function of curating, the educational role of the museum is now regarded as essential in justifying public investment in the sector, and as a key tool in developing culturally and demographically diverse audiences.

Today, education in UK museums is used both to fulfil institutional objectives of audience development and to realise external public policy objectives of ameliorating social exclusion, promoting lifelong learning and increasing access to culture. These uses reflect wider international trends, as well as factors specific to this country:

- the introduction of the National Curriculum and the subsequent development of a closer relationship between schools and museums
- the growing professionalism of education practice within museums and the influence of professional bodies and ginger groups, such as the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and the Campaign for Learning in Museums and Galleries (clmg)
- the findings of a major Government report (Anderson, David (1997), *A Common Wealth: Museums and Learning in the United Kingdom - a report to the Department of National Heritage*. London: Department of National Heritage)
- New Labour Government priorities for access, social inclusion and lifelong learning
- substantial public funding for museum education from the Department of Education and Skills and Resource, and the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives
- the development by Resource of the first national standard for access and learning in museums, libraries and archives (2002).

At the same time, the practice of education in museums has both diversified and developed, partly in response to theories of learning, such as Gardner's 'multiple intelligences' (1983, 1993) and Hein's notion of the 'constructivist museum' (1998)¹. Although it is dangerous to generalise and provision remains uneven, many museum education programmes today are characterised by an emphasis on active participation (including role play), self-direction and discovery, and creative expression. Within some institutions, tensions persist between curators and educationalists over who is authorised to interpret the collections and over the appropriate media and content of communication with the museum's publics.

Within this spectrum of educational work, theatre, or live interpretation, is a particularly contested practice. Unlike other activities (such as workshops, activity trails and handling sessions) whose use is widespread throughout the sector, the use of drama as an interpretative tool in UK museums is limited by both practical and philosophical factors. On the one hand, high-quality museum theatre is (often) relatively costly to produce and stage.

¹ Howard Gardner (1983), *Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences*, New York: Basic Books; Gardner (1993), *Multiple intelligences: the theory in practice*, New York: Basic Books; and George Hein (1998), 'The Constructivist Museum', in *Learning in the Museum*, London, pp. 155-79.

On the other hand, many museum professionals resist the use of what they regard as an inherently fictionalising medium of interpretation, which deflects learning away from material evidence and towards performance – and even entertainment.

What is at stake is the very nature and purpose of learning in museums – namely, who is responsible for research and interpretation in the museum? And, given that neutral interpretation is neither possible nor, arguably, desirable, whose voices are heard in the museum? Should the museum's narratives exceed the 'stories' told by its collections, in order to fill in gaps in the collections and/or to offer alternative points of view? Should museums promote affective, as well as cognitive, learning in order to develop their publics' understanding of issues as well as facts? Although these questions lie outside the scope of this project, they constitute a highly topical professional and intellectual context for research.

1.2.2 Theatre as an educational medium

The use of theatre as an educational tool in museums and at heritage sites has its roots in two main traditions: the theatre-based practice of theatre-in-education (TIE) and museum-based 'first' and 'third person' interpretation.

In the UK, theatre with a direct educational purpose has long been a feature of the contemporary theatre scene². Beginning in the mid-1960s, as part of an attempt by the expanding regional repertory theatre system to establish close links with the communities it served, TIE soon became a widely-used means of theatre 'outreach'. It was valued by teachers for its ability to engage children in a range of subject areas through powerful, often provocative methods which complemented more conventional teaching programmes. Dedicated professional companies tackled subjects as diverse as local history, racism, personal and social education, health education, even mathematics. Their methods of approach and styles of participation varied according to the target audience.

As radical changes in the funding of the arts and in the whole structure of education (including the devolution of budgets from Local Education Authorities to the schools themselves) took place through the late 1980s and early 1990s, so the shape and methods of approach, and indeed scale, of TIE changed. Many TIE companies folded, including the National Trust's long-established Young National Trust Theatre (in 2000).

New sources of funding then began to come on stream and surviving companies learned to adapt to a world in which an increasing proportion of educational theatre work was now commissioned by agencies (such as Health Promotion bodies). The expansion in the number of museums and their determination to find ways of engaging young people with their collections and imaginative ways to explain to *all* visitors the significance of what they had come to see, has led to an increase in the role of drama as an interpretative medium.

In particular, the use of actors to tell the stories associated with the collections has expanded considerably. Actors, directors, writers and education officers have frequently turned to TIE methods to provide interactivity – through techniques such as role-play, 'forum theatre' and 'hot-seating' – which can then be adapted to the particular collection, site, audience and budget available. Some museum educationalists, on the other hand, believe interaction is best confined to audience question-and-answers with the actor out-of-role after the performance, and have embraced more traditional, non-interactive styles of performance in the belief that a strongly-delivered, theatrically-conceived monologue played to a gathered audience gives much sharper focus to the subject matter. The debate continues.

² See Jackson (1993), *Learning through Theatre: new perspectives on theatre in education*. London: Routledge.

First- and third-person interpretation is less overtly performance-based: it generally involves interpreters (with or without actor-training) in appropriate period costume interacting with visitors to interpret a heritage site or museum collection. The 'first person' interpreter assumes a specific role or character; the 'third person' interpreter remains himself while talking about the past. Some of the more adventurous 'first person' work has been pioneered at major heritage sites in the USA such as Colonial Williamsburg and Plimoth Plantation, Massachusetts, and more recently in the UK. This can incorporate elements of traditional theatre (character impersonation, costume, improvisation around a given scenario, even a stage set, as in the replica 17th century Pilgrim village at Plimoth), while simultaneously prioritising conversational interaction, in-role, with visitors³.

Museum theatre is, then, an eclectic medium, drawing from the whole range of performative and role-based styles of interpretation. The International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL, based in the USA) and the recently-formed IMTAL-Europe were established to promote good practice and networking within the museum theatre and live-interpretation industry, and to foster the wider understanding of museum theatre in its many forms. IMTAL-Europe hosted a major international conference and festival of museum theatre in London in September 2001.

1.3 The research team

- Anthony Jackson
Senior Lecturer in Drama, University of Manchester. Research Team Leader.
- Paul Johnson
Research Assistant, appointed specifically for this project.
- Dr Helen Rees Leahy
Director, Centre for Museology in the School of Art History and Archaeology, University of Manchester.
- Verity Walker
Director, Interpretation: an independent museum consultant; a director of IMTAL-Europe (International Museum Theatre Alliance).

1.4 Phase One: a pilot research project

1.4.1. Background to the Phase One research

In Spring/Summer 2001, with financial help from the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and encouragement from IMTAL-Europe members, and colleagues at the University of Manchester, Verity Walker piloted a small-scale research project aimed at developing a practical research methodology for museum theatre and live interpretation. The project

³ See for example, Stacey Roth (1998), *Past into Present: effective techniques for first-person historical interpretation*, Chapel Hill: University of N. Carolina Press; S. E. Snow, *Performing the Pilgrims: ethno-historical role-playing at Plimoth Plantation*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi; and Catherine Hughes (1998), *Museum Theatre: communicating with visitors through drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

lasted for two months, not including the analysis stages. It was entitled: *Towards a research methodology for live interpretation: a pilot project at the Tower of London*.

Walker assembled a project team consisting of Irene Davies, Head of Education at the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London; Rosanna Summers, Education Manager for Mark Wallis' professional live interpretation company Past Pleasures; and Kate Green, a teacher from the Hermitage School in Tower Hamlets. Kate Green's class of Year 3 children were multi-cultural and multi-lingual and (with hindsight) a little young for this kind of project, but nonetheless agreed to participate enthusiastically.

1.4.2 The Phase One research

Rather than attempting a validation of live interpretation in isolation, Walker decided, after discussion with the University of Manchester team, that it would be more objective to compare the reactions of children who had experienced two different means of learning during a visit to the Tower: one live interpretation, one the best of traditional methods. To try to make this approach as fair as possible, the class was divided into two groups of even ability and it was decided to target one particular subject area of which the class had virtually no knowledge in advance: the life of Anne Boleyn. The project focus was to test the children's reactions to and recollections of this one subject area both immediately afterward and one month later.

Rosanna Summers enacted an astute cousin of Anne Boleyn's, who played the marriage game successfully and survived, and whose views shed light on the life of Anne but also on the Tower. Irene Davies led a tour of relevant areas of the Tower and gave a slide show for the second group.

Immediately after the visit, the children were questioned using a pre-agreed set of questions to try to ensure absolute objectivity. Their responses were logged. As language ability was an issue for some of the children, they were also asked to draw a picture inspired by the day, and this pictorial data proved especially fascinating. Interestingly, the life of Anne Boleyn figured little in this early work, and the Tower itself dominated both groups' pictures.

A month later Walker returned to the school and questioned the children again, partly repeating questions asked previously, partly asking new questions. It was on this occasion that the styles of answer from the two groups began to separate out more clearly. This time, both groups were asked to draw a picture inspired by the life of Anne Boleyn, and again the drawings reflected very clearly the differing types of visit they had experienced.

1.4.3 Phase One conclusions

The methods trialled in Phase One were monitored and evaluated by the University of Manchester research team. The pilot project provided too small a sampling to allow definitive conclusions to be drawn from the children's responses. However, the larger-scale Phase Two project was designed to improve and build on the techniques used in the pilot. The following questions emerged as needing a particularly careful approach in the main project:

- Do children who have experienced live interpretation/theatre during their museum visit recall their museum experience differently than those who experienced alternative museum methods? This should be tested especially at the second (longer-term) post-visit stage
- Is there any foundation for the widely-held view that live interpretation in some way detracts from the impact of the historic site itself? The Phase One research, especially looking at the children's pictures, seems to suggest that it does not necessarily have that effect
- How might the research methodology, involving a comparative study of theatre and non-theatre educational techniques, be tested further and made more robust?

A further question that arose from the Phase One study was:

- Is there a correlation between the amount of colour used and the vividness of the children's drawings and the type of visit they experienced?

In practice, the number of variables involved (individual talent, time, access to materials, etc) led the team to give this a lower priority in determining Phase Two aims and objectives.

In terms of developing methodology for Phase Two, a number of practical considerations were underlined in Phase One:

- Research of this kind benefits from a teamwork approach: the participation of several researchers helps to ensure balance, rigour and a reasonable degree of objectivity
- Once the research activity/visit is complete, further exploration of the museum by the school group should be discouraged, in order to avoid diluting the impact of the monitored experience
- Appropriate written, oral and creative responses to questions should be built in to the research. It is important that, as far as possible, the research gauges the variety of responses that children may have to the experience - and that it does not merely test the articulacy or literacy of the pupils. Thus, it should never be assumed that a silent child simply has nothing to say; art may be particularly appropriate to non-English first language children.
- Careful consideration has to be given to how best to document verbal, written or creative responses. In order to gauge oral response, it is usually preferable to limit the number of children being interviewed at any one time to no more than five : larger numbers can be difficult to monitor without the imposition of counter-productive external controls. Likewise, some form of discreet audio recording, rather than note-taking, is helpful in allowing the researcher to listen attentively and to check detailed and accurate responses after the event.
- It was found to be helpful to establish a sense of partnership with the children involved: their willingness to be part of the research and a recognition of their importance to the project are essential in creating a conducive and productive framework for the research in the classroom.

A full report on this pilot project was published in the *Journal of Education in Museums* (JEM) 22: 2001, pp 14 – 20.

Section 2: Aims, objectives and research methodology

2.1 Aims

The key aims of the research were originally identified as:

1. To test a number of the claims made for the educational effectiveness of theatre techniques in museum contexts, and, particularly, the claim that museum theatre can uniquely enhance children's understanding and recall of significant features of the social history associated with an historic site or museum collection.
2. To investigate, in comparison with other ways of conveying historical information, the strengths and weaknesses of such theatrical methods in museum contexts.
3. Through a six-month pilot study, to test the viability and potential of more sustained, longer-term research into the effectiveness of museum theatre, and applied to a more diverse range of theatrical methods, audiences and contexts.

2.2 Objectives

The key objectives of the research were originally identified as:

1. To research two representative types of museum theatre work which use (respectively) performance-based and interactive approaches, and operate in site-based and conventional museum settings.
2. To utilise and test the validity of appropriate qualitative research methods when applied to museum theatre.
3. To disseminate the findings of the research via articles in refereed journals, newsletters of the relevant professional associations, the World Wide Web, and relevant international conferences.

2.3 Research methods

[See also Appendix A for the extracts from the original AHRB application.]

2.3.1 Museums

The project involved the participation of two primary schools at each of two museums:

- The People's History Museum at the Pump House, Greater Manchester (PHM), where actors are employed in story-telling roles, specifically in this case a performance-based presentation as Gabrielle, a woman from St Kitt's in the Caribbean who came to the UK in the 1950s
- The Imperial War Museum, London (IWM) – a more interactive event in which pupils meet Muriel, a housewife, outside her typical semi-detached house during the 2nd World War. The full-size replica house was based on the Channel Four '1940s House' series.

The historical information, learning objectives and evaluative methods were agreed in advance between the team, participating schools and the museum education departments.

They related directly to the specific site and exhibits to be visited, and to the history curriculum at Key Stage 2.

2.3.2 Site visits

For each site, we compared two types of visit: one with and one without theatre-based interpretation. Before the visit, all pupils participated in structured, teacher-led class discussion to establish a baseline so that the extent of their prior knowledge of the subject and their familiarity with museums could be assessed (see comments on the individual schools for a general description of catchment area, pupil intake and teaching styles, including the place of museum visits within the curriculum). It was decided not to identify the racial/ethnic mix of pupils in each class since this could easily be misleading. A child's ethnic origin does not in itself signify experience or prior knowledge of immigration, for example.

One class then visited the site and participated in a museum theatre presentation which covered the required information in an indirect manner (via interaction with costumed actor). The other group visited the same site but without a theatrical input – i.e. they received information by more direct, explicit means (such as introductory talk followed by individual or group 'trails' with workbooks, investigation of documents, artefacts, etc).

While one method stressed 'live interpretation' and historical dramatisation, the other stressed learning from objects with some role-play, making and researching activities. The two routes each offered a genuine educational alternative to the other.

2.3.3 Post visit (PV) testing

PV1: Immediately after their visit, all pupils were tested in a variety of formal and informal ways (semi-structured interviews in small groups of three, and complementary activities involving drawing and creative writing) in order to ascertain how much they had absorbed and understood from each technique and how they had acquired their understanding – noting their feelings about their experience, not only their retention of facts.

PV2: After a further two months, the class was re-tested, again using small group interviews but with new and modified questions. There was a further opportunity for picture-drawing, this time accompanied by captions, to see how much they had remembered and absorbed, and whether there were noticeable differences in these respects between the two parallel groups.

The basic set of questions, and other methods of gaining feedback from pupils and teachers, were broadly the same for both museum theatre events. In order to minimise the variables and provide some opportunity for systematic comparison, the age range of the pupils tested was also the same for both events: Year 6 (Key Stage 2: 10-11 year olds).

Interviews were also conducted with the education personnel and performers at each museum and with the relevant class teachers in order to ensure a 'rounded picture' of the events at the museums and the educational strategies underpinning them, and of the teachers' assessments of how their pupils had responded. See Sections 3.3, 4.4 and 4.8 and Appendices C and D for further details.

2.4 Research approach

The research methods were primarily qualitative rather than quantitative, evaluating the impact of the programme upon a relatively small number of children and with greater responsiveness to the views of the participants than is usually possible in large-scale, questionnaire-based surveys. This enables a true reflection of the multiple voices and

multiple narratives involved – that includes the voices of all those who had a stake in the project, not only the pupils, but museum staff, actors and teachers from each school.

We tried to ensure that the means of capturing the pupils' responses did not prioritise conventional, more readily measurable cognitive processes, but took account of recent theories of learning. These include Howard Gardner's theory of 'multiple intelligences' (Gardner 1983), which radically widened the definition of human intelligence to embrace not only linguistic and logical but many other ways of knowing, applicable in different permutations to all learners according to psychological disposition, cultural and social upbringing, etc, and challenging educationists to ensure that they meet the needs of cognitively diverse classrooms.⁴

The approach was also 'naturalistic' (rather than 'experimental'), based on what the museums and schools would normally be doing - no new programmes were devised for the purposes of the research; only the division of visiting school groups into those that followed a 'theatre' pathway and those that followed an alternative ('non-theatre') pathway departed from the usual museum visiting practice.

⁴ Gardner proposed eight categories of intelligence (and has since suggested there may be more): linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, naturalist, interpersonal and intra-personal. See Gardner, *Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences*, New York 1983. The implications of such theories for this research will be pursued further in articles to be written following the research.

Section 3: Project narrative

3.1 Setting the framework: August 2001 – July 2002

The research proposal was submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) in November 2000, and the decision to fund the research was announced in May 2001 - the AHRB awarded the proposal A+. Following the appointment of the research assistant, the research team of four began work on August 1st 2001.

We conducted a full literature review and consulted a wide range of professional museum educators, theatre practitioners and academics in the process of refining and modifying the original research design. The two participating museums were selected and negotiations began to select two schools in Manchester and two in London. Field work began in September 2001 and continued through to February 2002. Data analysis was completed by mid-April 2002. Writing-up and dissemination took place from April to July (see Appendix B for a calendar of the field work).

3.2 Changes made to scope and methodology

A number of modifications proved necessary, both to the scope of the enquiry and to the methodology employed, due to the inevitable constraints involved in any research that prioritises a 'naturalistic' mode of enquiry. The changes made were consistent with the project's primary goals and the team is confident that the validity of the research was not compromised. In some respects, the changes actually helped to increase the robustness of our research procedures.

3.2.1 Museum-only focus

For both logistical and methodological reasons the team decided to focus on two museum-based projects and not on theatre at a heritage site. By instead examining performances of a broadly similar style across two participating museums, the number of variables was considerably reduced. The in-depth comparison of a one-character performance with a degree of audience interaction was in accordance with the styles on offer at those two museums: the similarity of performance mode was simply one of the 'givens' of the research. There were nonetheless significant and productive differences between them, for example:

- the PHM performance was the more overtly performance-based of the two - a carefully scripted and structured story/monologue, enacted within a museum space but not directly related to or dependent upon it (hence the ease with which the performance was able to travel to schools and retirement homes/community centres)
- the IWM performance was a form of first-person interpretation situated in and closely related to a carefully simulated/reconstructed environment. The character was therefore 'in situ' and related all her character portrayal and storytelling directly to the house/garden that she 'inhabited'. The monologue was conversational in style and invited interaction throughout.

3.2.2 Cancellations

The events of September 11th 2001 also had their impact on this research. In London especially, museums generally experienced cancellations of bookings from school parties. It was therefore with some difficulty that we were able to finalise the two participating schools for the Imperial War Museum part of the research: one of the schools was recruited very late in the process which meant they could not prepare pupils for the visit as fully as planned. This variable has been allowed for in our findings.

3.2.3 Modifying research to meet the circumstances of the chosen museums and schools

Once the museums and the schools had been selected, the research design underwent appropriate modification. In order to ensure as much equivalence as possible between the two alternative routes followed by the pupils (the 'theatre' and 'non-theatre' experiences), we drew upon the existing educational programmes of the two museums.

At IWM, there was already on offer to schools a well-trying, regular feature of the educational programme, the '1940s Model House' (although the duration of the session was considerably longer than the 'theatre' experience). At the PHM, some modification was required: the education officer adapted his guided tour so that the same content was covered and within a broadly similar time-period (details in Section 4). In naturalistic research, a precise equivalence between the two routes undertaken could never be expected; it was however as close as it was possible to make it, and, most importantly, the 'non-theatre' experience was not offered as 'second best' at either of the museums, nor did the pupils see it as such.

For logistical reasons, and to ensure an alignment of the research with usual school practice, it was decided *not* to split each class into 'theatre' and 'non-theatre' groups, but rather to track two parallel classes from each school, both comprising pupils of the same age group and same ability range and both following the same history curriculum.

3.2.4 Development of categories of pupil response

Before the first set of pupil interviews, the team agreed a broad set of questions that would test for recall and understanding in a number of ways, and began to evolve the set of criteria by which we would attempt to gauge, classify and compare the pupils' responses. The original list of categories helped us to design the sets of questions being asked at the PV1 and PV2 interviews, but was amended at several stages as a result of a trawl of responses from PV1 and following our analysis of the pictures drawn, letters written and PV2 interview responses. In other words, we applied the principles of holistic and responsive evaluation design, acknowledging the voices of the children, rather than trying to impose rigidly our own pre-conceived matrix of what the pupils should be saying.

The characteristics of these seven **categories of pupil response** were originally summed up as follows (see Section 5 for an analysis of some of the problems encountered):

1. **Experience:** pupils' explicit reference to their overall museum experience

- likes/dislikes about of being at a museum
- getting there and back
- sense of enjoyment (or not)
- awareness of what the museum is for and why they are there
- explicit comments on the exhibits
- hands-on (or hands-off) opportunities
- exhibit layout
- likes/dislikes of the programme itself

2. **Recall:** accurate recollection of what pupils saw/heard/touched/did

- has their visit slipped into a vague memory which needs a lot of prompting?
- can they recall *details* of the visit/artefacts/story-telling?

- can they give concrete examples to demonstrate that recall?
- recall of particular stories that evidently had a resonance for pupils and might be seen as metaphors for or indicators of more complex events (See also 'Understanding')

3. **Understanding:** have pupils digested/processed the information correctly?

- some overlap with 'Connections', but the emphasis here is upon the *accuracy, depth and complexity* of the information and insights the pupils have picked up (including an acceptance of ambiguity and complexity).
- to be differentiated from 'Recall', with the emphasis upon pupils' grasp of *why and how* things happened
- to be differentiated from 'Ownership' in the emphasis upon the *historical actuality* rather than on how far pupils can demonstrate their personal relationship with the material.

4. **Connection-making:** the ability to connect different elements of the information and experience they have received

- extent to which they see the whole experience – exhibits, performances/story-telling – as an integrated one
- are they able to relate different elements from the same period?
- Can they see that one element of the collection (or story) follows another chronologically, with cause and effect? (NB: this category is not used to indicate connections with children's own lives – see 'Ownership') (See also 'Understanding')

5. **Surprise:** seeing with fresh eyes

- evidence of astonishment, fascination or realisation for the first time of some aspect of life in the past
- evidence of a challenging of preconceptions, and *perhaps* of a resulting change of attitude about the past (whether events, objects or ways of life)

6. **Ownership and Empathy:** making connections between their museum experience and their own lives; engagement with the material and the historical figures

- links between the past and the world they know personally
- articulating those links through the way they talk personally about them in interview
- the personal investment evident in their drawings/pictures etc
- has the experience 'made it real' for them?
- has it offered a way of 'authenticating' an aspect of the past (i.e. an authenticity that the pupils clearly recognise in their own terms, as opposed to taking it on trust from teachers or museum)? (See also 'Understanding').

Empathy refers to engagement at the emotional and imaginative rather than cognitive levels ('*There but for the grace of God...*' or '*I'm writing to you as Gabrielle*', etc). There must be a degree of imaginative and/or emotional identification with one or more of the historic figures encountered.

7. **Inspiration:** the curiosity the visit has triggered

- motivation to want to find out more or to undertake further tasks related to the topic indicated in their creative writing or artwork
- interest shown in class discussion, further research, etc.

3.3 Participating museums

3.3.1. The Pump House People's History Museum, Manchester



Figure 1: The Pump House People's History Museum, Manchester

Opened in 1994 and located in the city centre in Manchester's last surviving hydraulic pumping station, the Pump House Museum (PHM) is the home of the National Museum of Labour History. The museum originated in the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative History Society, which began to form a collection in 1960 that was displayed between 1975 and 1986 in a museum in Limehouse Town Hall. The museum is an independent charity with no political affiliation, and in 1998 was recognised by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as having pre-eminent collections of national importance and awarded designated status.

The collection includes banners from 1821 to 1990, political posters, a reconstruction of a 1930s Co-op shop, and Stanley Matthew's football boots. The focus of the museum is on 'the extraordinary story of ordinary people'. It is divided into five sections (which are explained in a panel by the gallery entrance under the title 'What is this museum all about?'), four of which run roughly chronologically. These are *Revolution*, *United We Stand*, *Spreading the Word*, *Facing the Future*, running from 1790, 1820, 1890 and 1920 respectively. The final section, *After Work*, examines leisure activities across the whole period of the museum.

The collections on display are housed in 580 square metres of gallery space on two levels in the main gallery and two levels in a temporary exhibition gallery. Various scenes are recreated in the galleries, such as a suffragette's kitchen, a 1930s Co-op shop and a 1945 living room. There is no one route around the gallery, and a variety of interpretative media are used. There are reconstructed rooms, some that can only be looked into, such as the Tin Plate Workers Society meeting, and some that can be entered into, such as the 1940s living room. There are also objects, both replicas and originals, both in and out of cases. There are a small number of hands-on activities such as a juke box to play music on, a clocking-in clock and boxes to make, which demonstrated piece-working at home. The restricted space means that there is little separation, either thematically or chronologically, of the different areas of the museum.

The education programme for school groups relies heavily on drama, and is expanding this provision to include other visitors and outreach work. The drama programme uses a single character to examine either some aspect of the collection or some of the social history associated with the collection. The extent to which the characters directly address the museum's collection is somewhat variable, though all have worksheets which attempt to highlight what relationship there is. At present four performances are in use with school groups, including *Shop Front Home Front*, with the character Dotty Salter, a Co-op worker before and after World War II, *How Do You Plead?* with William Cuffay, a black Chartist leader, and *No Bed of Roses*, that was used for the research, which focuses on Gabrielle, an emigrant from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950s. Other education provision includes guided or self-directed tours, archive work, and banner-making sessions, where schools produce banners reflecting their individual character.

3.3.2 The Imperial War Museum, London



Figure 2: The Imperial War Museum, London

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) is the national museum of twentieth century conflict, funded directly by central government. It collects, interprets and exhibits a wide range of visual and material evidence relating to the history of modern war and to wartime experience of both armed combatants and civilians, whether allied or enemies. Its remit embraces the causes, course and consequences of conflict, and public education, as well as scholarly research, is central to its function. Today, the Museum collects every type of evidence of war, including: paintings, drawings and sculptures and posters; objects ranging from aircraft, armoured fighting vehicles and naval vessels to uniforms, badges, personal equipment, and medals and decorations; documents, books, film and video, photographs and sound recordings.

The IWM was founded in 1917 to record the story of the Great War and the contribution to it made by the peoples of the British Empire. Its role was subsequently expanded to include all subsequent wars and conflicts involving Britain and the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1936, the museum moved to the central portion of the former Bethlem Royal Hospital in Southwark, South London, where it remains today. The museum now has a further four sites beside the original site: the Cabinet War Rooms and HMS Belfast (both in London), Duxford

Airfield, Cambridgeshire, and (since Summer 2002) the Imperial War Museum North, Greater Manchester.

The research project took place at IWM London and was based on existing programmes run by the Education Department's well-established services for schools. The overall aim of the Education Department is 'to interpret the collections imaginatively to all levels of interest and provide the fullest range of learning opportunities, addressing contemporary and historical issues, meeting the needs of the national curriculum and providing life-long learning opportunities.' The curriculum-based schools service at IWM London includes a range of resources for pupils studying the Key Stage 2 option 'Britain Since 1930', and both the activities (theatre and non-theatre) which formed the basis of this research focused on the impact of the Second World War on ordinary people's lives.

The Education Department provides diverse resources for teachers and pupils, including self-directed tours (using worksheets and activity books), workshop activities and a programme of pre-bookable actor-interpreter sessions. The actor-interpreter sessions take place throughout the museum, and currently include an air-raid warden in the Blitz Experience and either a first world war soldier or a nurse in a casualty clearing station in the Trench Experience.

The theatre experience investigated in this research is based in a life-sized reconstruction of 17 Braemar Gardens, a pre-war suburban 'semi'. Within the immersive environment of the 1940s House, in which the details of suburban family life are faithfully recreated, pupils meet the actor-interpreter in the back garden, complete with 'Dig for Victory' vegetable patch and Anderson Shelter, where she is hanging out the washing. The performance is provided by Spectrum, a company specialising in live interpretation in museums and heritage sites which is regularly commissioned by the IWM to provide actor-interpreters.

The alternative, non-theatre activity demonstrates the range of educational activities and resources provided by the IWM. 'The Model House Project' is centred on a dolls-house style reconstruction of a house where the Allpress family lived during the Second World War. The session is led by a museum education officer and combines study of documents and artefacts connected with the family with an object handling session and study of the Model House itself. This session is a regular feature of the IWM education programme and takes place in one of the attractive and well-equipped education rooms that are 'behind the scenes' at the IWM.

Section 4: Analysis of theatre and non-theatre activities and of pupil responses

4.1 Research at the Pump House Museum (PHM)

4.1.1 PHM theatre session, 'No Bed of Roses'

No Bed of Roses is described in the PHM publicity as follows:
'*Gabriella Walker: Factory Worker. Follow Gabriella's life as a schoolgirl in 1930's Caribbean to 1960's Manchester. Has she made the right decision to travel continents?*'⁵

The National Curriculum areas addressed in this session are 'Britain since the 1930s' for KS2 and 'Citizenship' for KS3. The session lasts two hours and can take up to thirty children, though the physical limitations of the gallery space mean that it is difficult for more than twenty-five children. The piece was commissioned soon after the Pump House opened as one of eight pieces; only four of these have gone on to be part of the education service repertoire. All the pieces use single-character performances with a museum education staff member, normally the education officer, as facilitator.

The *No Bed of Roses* session begins in the education room, a classroom-like space, just off the café/foyer area and before the entrance to the galleries themselves. The facilitator introduces the building and museums, asking questions about what one might expect to find in a museum and how history is studied. This leads to the concept of discovering history through talking to old people and Lizzie Hughes, the actress who played Gabrielle during the period of the research, is introduced as Gabrielle's grand-daughter. She then describes going to visit her grandmother: '*I was about to knock when I heard the sound of singing coming round the side of the house from the back garden. I went round the back of the house and there was my Gran singing her heart out as she put the washing out.*'

At this point the performer takes on the part of Gabrielle and begins to sing. This produced an immediate reaction from both the classes used in the research: an equal mixture of wonder and disbelief with wide-eyed glances at class mates and teachers, as if to check both that it was really happening and that it was allowed. Hearing the song appears to be the point at which the children begin to enter into an acceptance of the performance conventions of the piece. This opening prologue introduces the central themes of the piece, questions of home and identity, the idea of migration, and the central historical and geographical areas that are addressed.

Before the move to the gallery space the performer, now as Gabrielle's granddaughter again, asks the pupils to come with her if they want to find out more about life in the Caribbean. This invariably causes them to leap to their feet to follow her, physically making a commitment to be involved in the piece, only for the facilitator to hold them back to distribute worksheets and clipboards. Rather than diminishing the levels of excitement this delay appears to heighten the anticipation further which carries through to the gallery where the rest of the session takes place – both the 'found' space in which the performance is given (in the centre of the gallery) and the surrounding areas which house the main exhibits.

The organisation of the piece is such that it alternates between sessions with the facilitator, discussing areas of the museum in chronological order, and the performer telling the story of

⁵ Although the initial publicity for the character referred to 'Gabriella', her proper name, the actress decided that Gabrielle was a more appropriate version of the name for a character from St. Kitts.

Gabrielle. The sections of the gallery and historical areas covered by the facilitator are the 1930s in the Co-op shop (D14 in the Guide to the Museum Galleries) and the 1940s with the 1945 Living room (D17). The children work on the 1950s with the football and seaside recreation displays (E20, E21) and the 1960s with the 'Music While You Work' exhibition (E22) using an accompanying worksheet.



Figure 3: 'Gabrielle' teaches the dance to pupils visiting the Pump House Museum [The children shown are not from the class which participated in the research.]

The structure of the whole session is as follows:

1. Prologue in education room
2. Introduction to Co-op Shop and 1930s
3. Gabrielle as young girl in St Kitts. Gabrielle at age 20 – receives a letter from England
4. Introduction to Living Room and 1940s
5. Gabrielle reads letter from Victor, an old school friend, inviting her to England (class involved in decision and she opts to go)
6. Class divided into four groups to work on the work-sheets
7. Gabrielle at age 21 working in a factory and living in Stoke-on-Trent
8. More work in groups on worksheet
9. Gabrielle at age 31 in Manchester, about to hold a house warming party ('guests' learn a dance before Gabrielle reverts to being grandmother in the present day – see Fig. 3 above)
10. Short question and answer session.

The story of Gabrielle follows a fairly conventional arc of adversity overcome. As a child she gives a very personal perspective on being part of the British Empire, such as being allowed out of school on Empire Day, singing Rule Britannia or learning that 'the sun never sets on the British Empire'. This information is given without much understanding of what that might really mean, but instead with a childish pride in being part of a great club. Her naiveté acts not only as a device for communicating information to an audience but also as a means of developing audience sympathy with the character.

Various personal tragedies dominate the historical information, the death of a friend in an accident while playing on a railway line foreshadows the death of Gabrielle's own mother.

This death is anticipated and indicated to the audience and Gabrielle asks if they can guess what the 'very sad thing' that happened to her mother was. The death of her mother is followed by the first of several chronological jumps, indicated primarily by change in costume; in this case the change from juvenile bare feet to rather more grown up shoes. Here Gabrielle talks about the opportunities that exist in Britain and her desire to see it for herself. The scene ends with Gabrielle receiving a letter from England.

The next Gabrielle section concerns the decision to go to England, and after reading the letter from Victor inviting her to go to England to be his girlfriend she sets out the arguments for and against. This is followed by a 'thought transference' exercise, where the children are invited by the facilitator to place their hands lightly upon a 'frozen' Gabrielle's shoulder and whisper whether or not they think she should go to England, and why. Gabrielle then springs to life and repeats the suggestion as her own idea, much to the delight of the children. This is one of the few sections with any interaction, and here it is only the appearance of decision-making, her conclusion of going to England is never really in doubt. One further section that places a rather more active role on the audience is when they learn the dance for the party, which appeared to be greatly enjoyed.

The remaining sections concentrate on Gabrielle's experiences in Britain, her work and home conditions, her encounters with racism, and finally a reflection on her decision to come to Britain, concluding that: *'For good or bad – Britain is my home – in the 50s and 60s things were very difficult – I thought Britain was supposed to be the motherland but she didn't treat me like a mother'*. The final message, however, is a positive one, that she has *'survived to tell the tale'* and is taking *'everything that's on offer now'*.

The worksheets that are used have questions relating to the displays in the gallery, but not greatly to the performance itself.

4.1.2 PHM non-theatre session

The non-theatre experience was an adaptation of the 'basic' museum guided tour, but developed by museum staff specifically to provide an alternative to the *No Bed of Roses* session, covering equivalent themes and historical material. It involved a guided tour of the same sections of the museums as in *No Bed of Roses*, plus work in some additional areas, recorded oral history, hands-on activities and work with archive material. The session was intended to give the children a picture of the experiences of Caribbean people who migrated from their homeland in the 1950s, addressing the following questions:

- Why did they decide to go?
- What did they leave behind?
- What did they expect to find in England?
- Was reality very different?
- How were they treated when they arrived?

The structure of the session was as follows:

1. Introduction in the education room
2. Guided tours 1-3
3. Group investigation
4. Document study
5. Guided tours 4-6
6. Group investigation
7. Conclusion

Introduction: The session began in the education room with an introductory session, as with *No Bed of Roses*. This gave a general introduction to the museum and its aim to tell the 'extraordinary story of ordinary people'. This was followed by a short discussion of different ways of researching historical subjects, before beginning to focus on the theme of migration. This consisted of a brief introduction to the living conditions on St.Kitts in the 1930s, when the 1950s migrants were children and a discussion about the image of England they carried around in their heads.

Guided tours: The children were then taken to various areas of the museum:

- Guided tour 1 - Slavery. On the mezzanine level of the museum the groups stopped briefly to examine a 'slavery' sculpture in order to understand why African people were living in the Caribbean, and how the British Empire was built. This is one of the first exhibits encountered by visitors as they tour the museum. One school, Medlock, spent far more time here than Oswald Road, where for many children the sculpture did not register at all.
- Guided tour 2 - 1930s Co-op shop. The education officer talked to the groups about 1930s Co-op shops, in a session very similar to the *No Bed of Roses* session. They were also shown a copy of the 'Royal Reader' (archive material) and asked to contrast that with real life for ordinary people.
- Guided tour 3 - 1945 Living Room. Again, as with the *No Bed of Roses* session, the children are taken to the 1945 Living Room and are told about life in Britain during World War II. The session is slightly more in depth, and involves additional object handling (an ARP Warden's helmet and a piece of shrapnel.) As with the theatre group, they listened to the radio to find out who won the 1945 election.

Group work (investigation): in two groups, as in the *No Bed of Roses* session, they explored the Co-op shop and 1945 Living Room using the relevant pages in their activity booklets, with tasks such as counting the money in the till, weighing packages and various observation and interpretation tasks.

Document study: The groups used a variety of archive materials, some reproduction and some authentic, to address the question: Would you stay or would you go? The documents included newspaper reports, statements made by politicians, and documents that would have been given to immigrants. The class was split into groups of four and looked at the document, using the worksheet to decide, for example, who wrote the document and who it was aimed at. When they had worked in small groups for ten minutes they then fed back to the whole group.

- Guided tours 4 and 5 - Deal Porters and Sweated Labour: The children were divided into two groups to do 'hands-on' activities about the employment of immigrants in the 1950s and 60s. They made small cardboard boxes representing home-working and tied on a leather cap worn by dockyard workers (called deal porters after the softwood they carried) and walking along a line carrying a plank of wood. Due to time pressure, Medlock school did not take part in either of these activities, though they were not told that they had missed anything.
- Guided tour 6 - football, seaside and jukebox: As with the theatre session, the children looked at the 1950s and 60s through the football, seaside and jukebox exhibitions. There was very little formal museum staff input into these areas.

Group work (investigation): Again in two groups, the children explored the displays using the relevant pages in their activity booklets.

Conclusion: To finish the workshop the children listened to a number of oral histories from passengers and crew of the SS Windrush. This included one story in particular ('diamonds in the street') that focused on the recollection of one immigrant of how the stories told in the Caribbean about England proved different from the reality on arrival. There was then a brief opportunity to ask any final questions.

The session ran for two hours, and used the same worksheet as the *No Bed of Roses* session with some added material.

4.2 Participating schools at PHM

4.2.1 Medlock Primary School

Medlock Primary School is a mixed inner city primary school, 1km from Manchester City Centre. In 2001 there were 344 pupils of whom 115 were Special Educational Needs (SEN) without statements. Both participating classes were relatively typical of the school and included several children whose parents were recent immigrants to Britain. Nearly half the pupils receive free school lunches, and only a relatively small number of pupils remain in the school for the whole six years. The area surrounding the school suffers from many of the problems common to inner city areas, such as high unemployment and low incomes. Many of the children seem to use the school as a refuge from these problems, and teachers believe that there are perhaps fewer problems with behaviour or racism than might be expected. The school has approximately 45% white European children, with children from an Afro-Caribbean and Asian background in respectively smaller groups. At one point the school had pupils from nineteen different nationalities with fifteen languages represented, and an equally large spread of religions. In both classes, but in the theatre class in particular, there are children who have come to Britain within the last two years. Both classes had a very broad range of academic achievement, with many children receiving grade 5 SAT scores but many others receiving grade 3.

History teaching in the school is based on the National Curriculum, but due to the wide range of experience that the pupils bring is taught in as broad-based a way as possible, often using art. Because of the particular nature of the school, the teachers of the classes used in the research were particularly keen that the *No Bed of Roses* performance was used, and felt that it supported their ongoing work in the classroom though they had done little direct work on the subject.

The school is committed to making museum visits, often to the Manchester Museum or the Whitworth Art Gallery, both within walking distance. While the school as a whole has been involved in drama performances as part of a city festival, neither of the classes used in the research took part in that. They did use drama (role-playing) in their literature studies, most recently when studying *Richard III*, and appear comfortable with live performance.

4.2.2 Oswald Road Primary School

Oswald Road Primary School is a mixed school in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, which includes one of the more affluent suburbs of Manchester. Chorlton is close to the boundary of Old Trafford, and a significant number of pupils come to the school from the estates across that boundary. In 2001 there were 441 pupils, including 25 Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils without statements. The intake is mainly white, though there is a significant number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, with many religions represented. The classes used

in the research were typical of the school as a whole, with several pupils speaking some level of Arabic or Urdu, though none with significant difficulties with English as a second language. The non-theatre class had eight children of above-average ability, with one or two well above average, while the theatre group had fewer of above-average ability and a longer 'tail' towards the low ability end. The two classes had had a disrupted year without permanent class teachers directly before the research took place, which may perhaps have affected the levels of maturity and concentration, particularly in the theatre group. This difficulty also meant several children left the school, resulting in relatively small class sizes.

History tends to be taught through project work, using timelines to give the pupils a sense of chronology, and some work has been done on the concepts of evidence and reliability. The school attempts to encourage visits, both to museums and more generally – the term following the research visits were made to a Sikh temple and a Mosque – and generally parents are supportive. The research classes, however, had not had a great deal of experience of visits out of school before our research. Drama does not seem to play an important role in the school - there is an after-school drama club but few children attend it.

Before the museum visit, both groups had been studying post 1950s Britain through the life of John Lennon, and the previous year had done some work on the SS Windrush (one of the ships bringing Caribbean immigrants to Britain in the 1950s). The prior knowledge of both groups appeared comparable.

4.3 Pre-visit sessions at the PHM schools

- **Oswald Road**

For the Pre-visit session, both theatre and non-theatre classes followed broadly the same format. The aims of the visit were explained, then the pupils each filled in an 'idea web' about their experience of, and thoughts about, museums. This was then discussed as a class. Working in pairs, the pupils then filled in an 'idea web' relating to nationality, migration and the Caribbean, a task which they found considerably more difficult. This was then also discussed as a class.

- **Medlock**

The non-theatre group worked with a teacher who was not their usual class teacher, and discussed their experience of museums, with the teacher leading the discussion. They were then divided into groups and given large sheets with questions relating to nationality and migration. The teacher also talked about her own family background. The theatre group sat in a reading area to discuss their experience of museums, and what they knew about migration (one member of the class had recently moved to Britain from Montserrat). They were then divided into groups and given a sheet to complete three questions about differences between the Caribbean and Britain. Following this there was a lively discussion and feedback session.

4.4 Analysis of pupils' responses at PHM

We analysed two sets of post visit interview responses (PV1 and PV2) from the schools that visited the Pump House Museum, along with the complementary activities: pictures drawn and letters written at PV1 and pictures with captions drawn at PV2. This commentary may be compared with the summary charts in Appendix D⁶.

Key	
PV1	Post-visit 1: the first set of interviews and complementary activities at each school, usually within two days of the museum visit.
PV2	Post-visit 2: the second set of interviews and complementary activities at each school, approximately eight weeks after the museum visit.
Theatre group	Pupils who received the <i>No Bed of Roses</i> theatre programme as part of their visit.
Non-theatre group	Pupils who followed a guided tour, with additional activities - examinations of documents and objects, listening to archive tapes etc.

Questions asked at PV1 and PV2 interviews following PHM visit (for reference)

Post-Visit 1

1. What is your name?
2. What did you do at the museum?
3. Which parts of the museum did you particularly like?
4. Which parts of the museum did you particularly dislike?
5. Did you find out anything that surprised you (that you didn't know before)?
6. Was there anything you would have liked to learn more about?
7. How old would you be now if you were a child in the 1950's?
8. What are some of the differences between the 1950's and now?
9. Why did people come from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950's?
10. When people came from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950's what challenges faced them?
11. Are the things we learnt at the museum important or just history?

Post-visit 2

1. What is your name?
2. What did you do at the museum?
3. Were you surprised by what you did at the museum?
4. Why did people come from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950's?
5. How might they have felt?
6. Why might they have come to Britain rather than the USA or Australia?
7. If I was living in the Caribbean in the 1950's and thinking about coming to Britain what advice would you give me?
8. What was life like for people who came from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950's?
9. Some people say that museum visits are a waste of time and you can learn just as well in the classroom. What do you think?

For the full list of questions asked at the research interviews, see Appendix E.

⁶ The transcripts of the interviews conducted with pupils, education officers and performers, and the children's pictures and letters, are all stored in the CATR Archive at Manchester University Department of Drama, where they may, by prior arrangement, be viewed by *bona fide* researchers.

4.4.1 Commentary on Medlock Junior School at PHM

1. *Experience of the museum*

- *Interviews at PV1:* Although Medlock pupils were not asked directly about their *overall* experience of the museum, we can extrapolate from their stated 'likes' and 'dislikes' about the programme. Thus, the 'Co-op Shop', 'juke-box' and 'football' exhibits scored consistently highly as 'likes' across both groups; and 'handling artefacts' was mentioned positively by one non-theatre pupil. Very few dislikes were mentioned: the few that were tended to be about the journey to/from museum and (mostly from the non-theatre group), organisational problems ('too many people in one place', 'too much noise', 'couldn't always hear', 'there was not enough time') and the introductory session in the education room was 'boring'.
- *Letters:* These reveal no direct evidence, since pupils focused on imagining the experiences of immigrants rather than on artefacts or their tour of the museum.
- *Pictures:* As well as indicating an enjoyment of drawing, the care and detail invested in some of the pictures of particular exhibits does suggest interest in and fascination with aspects of the museum experience (e.g. the Co-op shop, with its products on shelves, the till, etc., was still being vividly recalled and re-constructed some two months after the visit).
- *Interviews at PV2:* Under question (2), there was much reference to how the museum proved to be far more hands-on and less like class work than they had expected: they clearly enjoyed getting involved in weighing shop goods, counting the old money, etc. Under question (9), the majority of pupils valued being able to 'see things as they really are' in a museum, while many claimed that 'museums can tell you more than teachers can' and several that 'otherwise you wouldn't know if it's true'. Others however did insist that the museum and the classroom complemented each other. Several said that learning history in a museum was 'easier' than 'being told about it'. The Gabrielle story-telling was explicitly referred to by two pupils ('you remember it better'). Appreciation of the 'hands-on' activities was evident in both groups.

2. *Recall*

- *Interviews at PV1:* A fair degree of recall was evident in the PV1 interviews, though it was of a rather standard, matter-of-fact kind. The format of the interviews meant that there was almost no time to press pupils for details (see comment in 'Additional Observations, 4.4.3). Recall appeared to be especially strong of 'rooms' visited (shop, living room, etc), things done (playing the juke-box; the 'deal-portering' for the non-theatre group), things watched or listened to (the Stanley Matthews football match – mainly the boys). Doing the workbooks/research was referred to by some, emphasised more by the non-theatre group, though some theatre group pupils mentioned it. Some mention was made of Gabrielle's story and the dance (theatre group); and of the slavery sculpture (non-theatre group).
- *Letters:* As noted under 'Ownership' below, there was substantial recall evident in the references to the experience of factory work, and coping with shillings and pence. Likewise, confusions and inventions are evident among some (e.g. pride expressed in having wide-screen television).

- *Pictures:* As under 'Ownership', a significant number of the pictures drawn by both groups at PV2 (two months after the visit) demonstrate an impressive recall of detail as well as of subject matter (e.g. the Co-op shop). This is more evident at PV2 than at PV1 because of the longer time allowed for the drawing.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Recall after two months was strong for the theatre group, but markedly less good for non-theatre group (and worse still for non-theatre group who had not been interviewed at PV1). The non-theatre group needed considerable prompting and the level of detail they could muster was comparatively low. The theatre group recalled an impressive amount of detail about Gabrielle's story, the Co-op Shop activity (including counting shillings and pennies), reasons why people, and Gabrielle, wanted to come to Britain.

3. Understanding

- *Interviews at PV1:* Most children had a clear understanding of the reasons for immigration (jobs and money) but some in the theatre group mentioned the war going on at the time as a factor, confusing the chronology and misapplying information they had gleaned about the dangers and deprivations of war to the situation of the 1950s. Misunderstandings were greater among the non-theatre group, especially about slavery, and some also misunderstood the education officer's explanation of how the British often perceived the Caribbean immigrants (thus, some children appeared to believe that Caribbean actually lived in trees back home).

Some misunderstanding of the living room exhibit was evident in both groups: a few thought the button on the wall to turn on the radio was an integral part of a 1950s living room, while others assumed that the section represented the whole room, i.e. that 1950s rooms were surprisingly small. A reminder to museum exhibit designers that young visitors may not always 'read' the exhibit in quite the same way that adults (with their prior knowledge of the period) will: everything in the frame may have equal significance, irrespective of the designer's intentions.

Often, the pupils' attempts to identify differences between the 1950s and the present are rather brief, suggesting they were content simply to list, for example, 'clothes', 'music', 'radios', and lack of time prevented supplementary questions. Some *apparent* confusion was evident in children's use of the terms 'now' and 'then', and 'here' and 'there' – especially in way they describe what life was like for new immigrants. (Sometimes 'here' meant the UK, sometimes it meant the Caribbean. The same fluctuation was apparent in the PV2 interviews, possibly reflecting the pupils' own ambivalence about how to position themselves in relation to the material they were encountering: for some there may have been empathy with Gabrielle; for those whose parents are immigrants there may have been personal reasons for their ambivalence; and the 1950s as witnessed in the museum was in a sense, for them, 'now' as well as 'then'.)

- *Letters and pictures:* Two letters from the non-theatre group made good comparisons between life in Caribbean and UK. Many letters showed the pupils understood the main differences between old and new money and enjoyed re-telling how many shillings they earned/spent (even if mathematically inconsistent). One (non-theatre) pupil clearly did fully understand the difference between British perceptions and prejudices about the Caribbean and the actuality, as expressed in her picture of someone sleeping in a hammock in the West Indies and in her angry letter fulminating against British misunderstandings and racism (**see fig. 5c**).

- *Interviews at PV2:* Most pupils from both groups could give accurate reasons why immigrants came to Britain: promise of jobs, more money, a better life, and Britain needed workers following the war. There was however some confusion evident in both groups over exactly when the war had been. The theatre group gave greater emphasis to the personal reasons for coming – hearing about Britain from radio, letters, school lessons etc (i.e. just as Gabrielle had heard) , and several theatre group pupils talked explicitly about having learnt more about ‘how it was’ when Gabrielle acted (e.g. ‘you remember it better’) or referred directly to Gabrielle’s story to explain the connection with England. The non-theatre group made more reference to England ruling the West Indies. Responses to questions (7) and (8) (‘advice’; ‘what it was like’) confirm that most had understood the difficulties faced by immigrants in deciding whether to come and, when here, in coping with the changes in life-style: hard work, dirty cities, climate, insecurity etc. The theatre group offered more reasons for a Caribbean person not to come, and a rather wider range of ideas about what it would have felt like here than did the non-theatre group. This may suggest a grasp of the complexity and ambiguity of the situation and the dilemmas faced; it may also however derive from pupils’ prior knowledge and experience.

4. Connections made

- *Interviews at PV1:* Some responses suggest that where pupils did make connections between different elements of the experience, they were confused – e.g. that Gabrielle came over to help with the war or escape from the war (theatre group).⁷ For the non-theatre group, the confusion was even greater – they made reference to escaping from slavery, and to people living in trees in the Caribbean. The confusion arose in part from the fact that, unlike the theatre group, the non-theatre group had their attention drawn explicitly to the museum’s slavery sculpture as they began their guided tour (possibly prompted by a question from pupils as it caught their eye - this group was the only group that had their attention drawn to the sculpture in such a pointed way). The guided tour for the non-theatre group also covered a wide range of information and exhibits from the 1930s - 1960s, with a similar lack of overt connectedness. Both groups lacked a clear grasp of chronology.
- *Letters:* Connections were rather more evident in the letters, especially the theatre group: they talk of Gabrielle having to learn about the currency, the post-war nature of lifestyles encountered, etc. Some referred to the lifestyles people were having to get used to (coping with weather, dirty factories etc); several non-theatre group letters effectively linked the audio-tape anecdote (about ‘diamonds in the streets’) with the general sense of being in a new country.
- *Pictures:* Connections were again evident in some of the pictures, where a few show football being watched on television in the living room or Gabrielle in the shop.
- *Interviews at PV2:* The theatre group often referred to Gabrielle as the means by which they learned about ‘how it was’ in the factories, dealing with racism etc . For question (4), some responses demonstrated an ability to understand the relationship between Britain’s war experience and its need for a ‘new’ workforce, although a few were still confused about who was fighting what war and when. Some reference was made to the contrast

⁷ Note: the confusion perhaps underlines what was observed on the performance days, that the theatre piece was not closely connected to the other elements the pupils learnt about, and (by general consensus) may need re-working to help integrate the whole experience. A more recent series of performances (summer 2002) was linked to a special exhibition on life in the Caribbean, which helped considerably to rectify the problem of dis-connectedness.

between life in the Caribbean and in Britain: the climate, work in factories compared with work on the land, etc.

5. Surprise

- *Interviews at PV1:* Several in the theatre group were surprised by the presence of an actor/Gabrielle; there was some surprise registered by the football enthusiasts over the differences between the 1950s boot and present styles, and others found the 1930s bike both strange and fascinating. More items were mentioned by the non-theatre group – e.g. the nasty eggs in post-war years; old-style money and tokens; helmets; bombs; juke-box; old-style football boots. This group had (by design) a fuller guided tour than did the theatre group and, in the process, had more time to dwell on the ‘strangeness’ of such items, aided by the education officer and accompanying teachers.
- *Letters and pictures:* These offer some *indirect* evidence of ‘surprise’. The children’s fascination with the Co-op Shop and the football boots and their decisions to focus on these in the pictures *may* suggest if not surprise, at least a change in their pre-conceptions about the period. A few of the letters express surprise, in character, at the differences in climate, city life, etc, which *may* reflect, vicariously, an element of surprise experienced during the museum visit.
- *Interviews at PV2:* These offered very little evidence, direct or indirect. Several were surprised at encountering the actor/play and the football match on television while others had expected a museum visit to be very different from the reality (see also under ‘Experience’).

6. Ownership and Empathy

- *Interviews at PV1:* Some intimation of ownership is given under the ‘what advice would you give?’ question - e.g. a non-theatre pupil gave advice to someone thinking of coming to the UK to ‘be yourself’, which suggests *some* emotional identification. Another clearly enjoyed the interactive ‘thought transference’ exercise with Gabrielle and the element of empathy with the character involved. In response to the final ‘Is it just history?’ question, several argued that studying history and going to museums were important ‘so we can feel sorry for others’ or ‘be grateful for what we’ve got now’ (non-theatre group). One pupil seemed proud that ‘her mum was from Jamaica’.
- *Letters:* the exercise required an imaginative effort to write home as though a recent immigrant, and many pupils clearly engaged with this energetically and with some conviction (e.g. the references to the experiences of factory work, coping with shillings and pence, suggesting that they had absorbed the nature of the challenge and the change to lifestyle well and found ways of integrating it into a particular, personal story); others did little more than ‘write home to mum’ with little evidence of any historical period or of the difficulties that might have been actually faced in the 1950s.

Evidence of *empathy* was more evident in the letters than in the interviews: some of the letters expressed a remarkable degree of urgency, anger and jubilation, while a few reflect a strong sense of bewilderment, mood swings, liking and disliking Britain at same time. Six of the theatre group’s letters adamantly declared deep dissatisfaction with life in Britain, compared with only two from the non-theatre group (but see especially the letter from one of the non-theatre pupils, intensely angry at the injustices of life in Britain – **Fig. 5c**). Eight of the theatre group express general satisfaction but with little detail (and correspondingly little sense of empathy) compared with ten from non-theatre group. Several are signed ‘Gabrielle’ and many from the theatre group referred to being happily

married (some to Victor); several recount how they answer the racists back (in the style of Gabrielle). A few of the non-theatre group refer to 'diamonds in the street' (including a delightful story about discovering snow and bringing it home to show the family).

- *Pictures:* Some of the pictures show an impressive degree of care and time invested in drawing the shop, Gabrielle, etc, especially those from PV2, suggesting a substantial personal investment in the subject-matter. Others are more routine, rushed or bland (especially those done at PV1 when there was less time available). That there was a preponderance of detailed, careful, thoughtful work produced at PV2 suggests that for many of the pupils at least, certain elements of their visits had been well digested and could after the passage of two months be recovered and expressed in their own style.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Ownership was manifested in interview more clearly at the PV2 stage, i.e. after some lapse of time and when questions were more 'targeted' (e.g. 'what advice would you give to *me*?', 'how might they have *felt*...?'). A number of pupils talked about being impressed by the way the museum made things '*real*' for them: the living room, shop, etc and about the fact that they '*did things*' (e.g. in the shop), '*got into it*', '*got involved*'; and the terms used to describe '*how people might have felt*' or when offering advice suggested an imaginative involvement in the experiences of immigrants. (See also 'Understanding'.)

A certain degree of empathy is evident among the theatre group in their use of Gabrielle as the peg on which to hang their explanations of why people from the West Indies decided to come to Britain. Questions (5), (7) and (8) elicited considerable imaginative identification with the feelings of immigrants before and after their journey to Britain: nervousness, insecurity, anxiety about racism, fear of the unknown, etc; and awareness of complexity of feelings once in Britain. However, some of the responses under 'advice' and 'feelings-while-here', while suggesting an emotional content, could also equally have arisen from personal feelings about their own or family situations in the present – the lack of historical content in *some* of the answers (e.g. '*scared of the unknown*') makes it difficult to tell how far any bridging of the gap between past and present was taking place. Other responses however suggested some empathy for immigrants in the 1950s because they could furnish more detail, more of an angle, e.g. '*felt strange - everything so different... clothes, people, behaviour, towns*', '*after the war, it was a smoky atmosphere*', '*shocked by the different climate*'.

7. Inspiration/motivation to want to know more

- *Interviews at PV1:* Little sense of 'inspiration' or motivation-to-know more came through in the interviews – responses were mainly to do with curiosity about clothes of the time, the style of the football boots, the old-style money, etc. More curiosity in this respect was evidenced in the non-theatre group. This may have been because the Gabrielle story partly answered those questions (they saw her wearing the clothes, *heard* her talk about coping with shopping, etc) and made them seem less problematic. Or the non-theatre group may have been more engaged in the investigative process, while the theatre-group were more readily satisfied by the story which in many ways *seemed* to resolve the issues it raised.
- *Letters and pictures:* Some pictures and letters contained a lot of detail and attempted to reflect the period quality of the shop, old-style football boots, etc, and did suggest a strong level of curiosity/inspiration to explore a topic further through artwork and imaginative first-person story-telling. The theatre group letters contained a higher level of detail than did the non-theatre group's. There is little to choose between the two groups' pictures. For the pictures done during PV2, a much higher quality of work is evident in

both groups - partly because they had more time to work on them; but they also show (in some) a striking attention to detail and a strong sense of what had particularly impressed them [see Figs. 5a, 5b]. However, we cannot simply deduce that the choice of subjects to draw reflects the subjects they were most inspired by – some things are easier to draw than others.

- *Interviews at PV2:* Evidence was not sought at PV2 and little hard evidence for 'Inspiration' can be teased out of the children's general responses – except that in retrospect, the detailed recall after two months among many of the theatre group suggests a high level of interest and motivation (see the teacher's comments under 4.4.3, Additional observations).

Summary of Medlock Junior responses

Main *similarities* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

Interview question	Theatre and Non-theatre groups
2	Many mentions of going to the shop and other rooms in the museum
4	Most mentioned the key reasons for coming to Britain (jobs, money)
5	Many mention nervousness and excitement as predominant feelings about coming to Britain
9	Most agreed you understand the past better by going to museum and seeing objects 'for real'

Main *differences* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

Interview question	Theatre group	Non-theatre group
All		Overall, fewer examples offered or reasons given by this group. Interviewer had to prompt more, <i>especially</i> for 3 rd group (who hadn't been interviewed in PV1). More things extraneous to the 'experience' were mentioned, e.g. the slave sculpture, a 'Caribbean at a stall upstairs'
2	Museum more like the real thing	Many more mentions of worksheets
	Strong recall of Gabrielle and her story	
4	Lots of references to people hearing about Britain via radio, letters, lessons, etc, i.e. personalised reasons	Several references to people in Caribbean living a primitive life
4, 5	Gabrielle's experiences referred to directly as examples of reasons	
6	Several thought 'Mother Country' needed help	More references to Caribbean as part of Empire and of Britain as a wealthy country
7	Many more reasons given for advising someone to stay in Caribbean	
8	Several mentions of disliking cold and dirt of life in Britain	
9	Several claimed you could get the 'truth' in a museum	

Response to interviews at PV2 compared with PV1:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
With some exceptions, able to give variety of reasons for their views and some specific examples (sometimes drawn from Gabrielle's story)	Much more prompting needed to recall details
Gabrielle referred to more this time round	
Less inaccuracies re the relationship between War and Immigration	Slightly less inaccuracies voiced about primitive way of life in Caribbean
	Co-op Shop referred to rather less

Complementary activities at PV2 compared with PV1:

No *direct* comparisons can be drawn between PV1 and PV2 since letters were only written during PV1; and significantly more time was allowed for pictures at PV2 than at PV1. Unsurprisingly, a higher quality of work is evident in the PV2 pictures drawn by both groups. However, the fact that many of the PV2 pictures contain a good deal of detail suggests strong evidence of clear recall and of interest in the subject matter. Also, some of the pupils were not identifiable (they had omitted names on pictures) while others submitted work at PV2 but not at PV1. So the statistics do not robustly demonstrate changes in *specific* pupils' responses, only a general trend based on a small sample.

The tendencies noticed below are suggestive when matched by similar tendencies in groups from the other school and in the school groups attending the IWM:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
More football pictures in PV2	
Fewer juke-box pictures	
Fewer Co-op Shops	Many more Co-op Shops
Fractionally more 'Gabrielles'; PV2 pictures also locate her in specific situations, e.g. in the dance, reading the letter	
	No radios in PV2
No pictures of other un-related elements in PV2 (in PV1, 'other' elements were all related to the museum visit but several were rather marginal to the main story, e.g. penny-farthing, bomb)	More pictures of other elements (e.g. 2 trains – from different museum; 2 canons; 'a Caribbean escaping...') in PV2



Figure 5a: Gabrielle and the pupils dancing (Medlock Primary: theatre group, PV2). Caption: 'I liked Gabrielle because it was in chresting'.

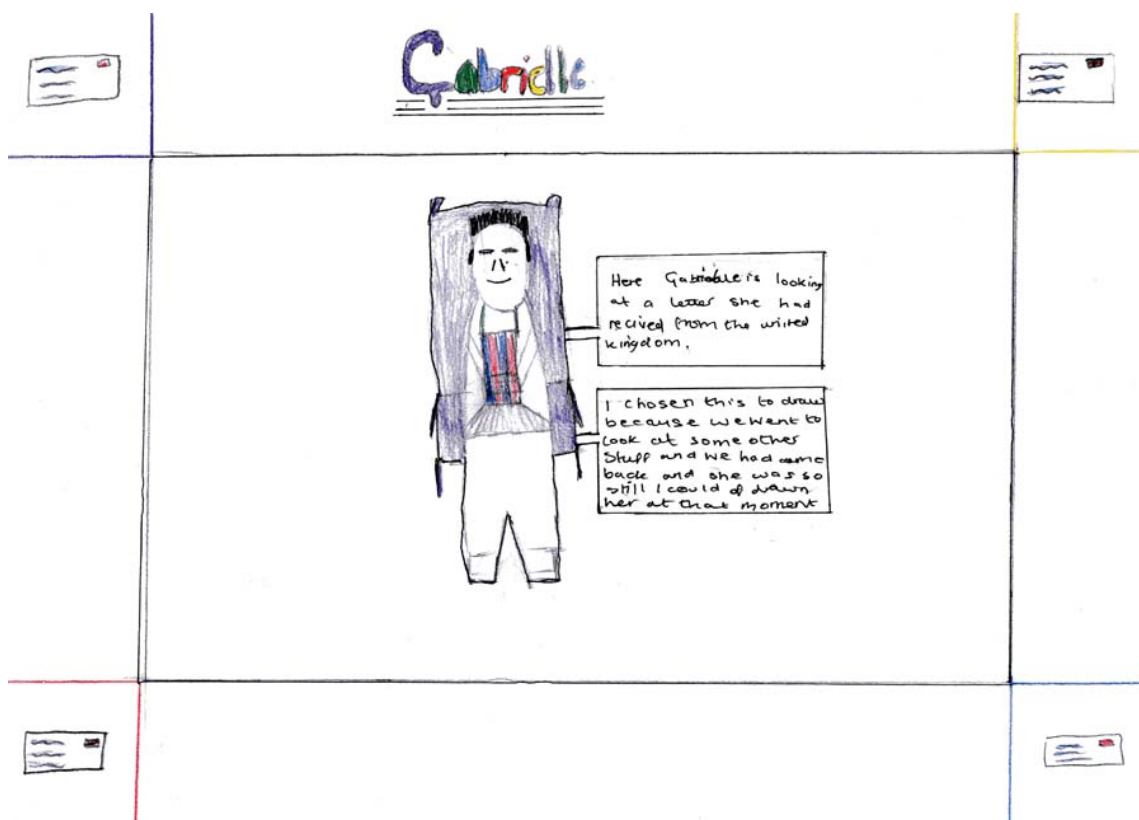


Figure 5b: Gabrielle sitting (Medlock Primary: theatre group, PV2). Caption: 'Here Gabrielle is looking at a letter she had received from the united kingdom. I chosen this to draw because we went to look at some other stuff and we had come back and she was so still I could of drawn her at that moment.'

Friday 12th July 1951

Dear grandad,

I really miss you and dad and mum. I'm choking on my rage because of this land. They think we live on trees and call us caribbean stinkers. I hate it England it is a place with no choices. Sometimes English people come to rescue me but they are taken to slavery. I miss you grandad, I want you to take me in when I'm sleeping and I miss you and me fishing. I'll always love you no matter what. I hope your safe I'm already in the gutter,

Love from Akkoro,

xxx

P.S I miss you already and I hope they release us free and it is painful seeing babies suffering. I can't finish saying bad things about britan..

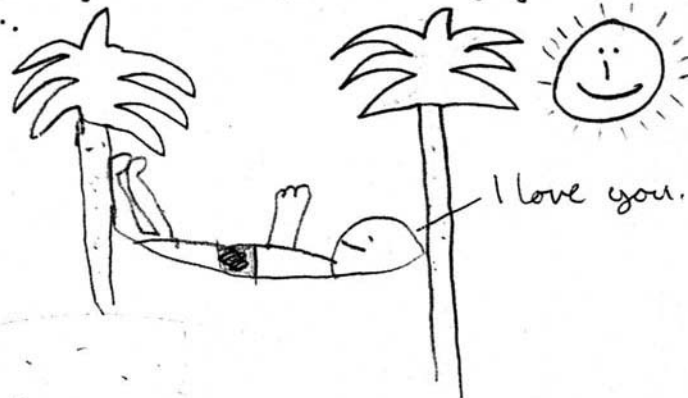


Figure 5c - an angry letter home (Medlock Junior: theatre group, PV2).

Letter reads: 'Friday 12th July 1951./ Dear grandad, I really miss you and dad and mum. I'm choking on my rage because of this land. They think we live on trees and call us caribbean stinkers. I hate it England it is a place with no choices. Sometimes English people come to rescue me but they are taken to slavery. I miss you grandad, I want you to take me in when I'm sleeping and I miss you and me fishing. I'll always love you no matter what. I hope your safe I'm already in the gutter, / Love from Akkoro [imagined name] / P.S. I miss you already and I hope they release us free and it is painful seeing babies suffering. I can't finish saying bad things about britan.'

4.4.2 Commentary on Oswald Road School at PHM

1. Experience of the museum

- *Interviews at PV1:* Overall, responses from both classes indicated very high levels of enjoyment. The interviews also revealed that the children found it easier to identify what they liked, rather than what they did not (*'I am not sure which bits I didn't like'*) and some said that they liked everything about their visit (*'There was nothing that I didn't like.'*) Dislikes were often prompted by an experience physical discomfort: *'I liked the living room bit, but it was a bit ... crowded and smelly'*. Similarly, one of the girls said that she did not like *'that bit when you had to put that piece of wood on your back'*, presumably because it was heavy, and she pointed out, *'....most of the girls didn't have a go because the man said that only boys did it'*.
- *Letters:* The letters show no direct evidence, given the brief for this exercise, but some indirect evidence of positive and vivid experiences is provided by the recall of details of, for example, life in Britain in the 1950s, and the imaginative reconstruction of a scenario based on what children heard and saw at the museum.
- *Pictures:* The children's drawings (from both groups) provide different kinds of evidence of their experiences: some focus on a particular, vividly remembered detail (e.g. a piece of shrapnel, a helmet, a box of sweets and the coach which took them to the museum), while others drew a composite of different elements of the museum (e.g. a composition comprising a shilling coin, a helmet, a piece of shrapnel and someone (the author?) carrying a piece of wood; another shows the green button which controls the 'radio' in the living room, a helmet, and the shrapnel).
- *Interviews at PV2:* There was a widely shared conviction that *'you learn more if you're enjoying yourself'*. This view was echoed in another interview: *'If you're enjoying yourself you might take in more...'*. A number of children claimed that this was a good reason to visit museums, which made a pleasant change from classroom teaching which, according to one child, *'can never be fun'*. By contrast, *'museums are better because they're fun as well'*. Another aspect of museum-visiting which the children viewed as positive was the chance to see the *'real thing'*, which is better than *'just being told'*, or even than looking at photographs - which is *'not the same as going to see it for real life'*. Similarly, another child commented: *'I think it's better to go to a museum 'cos like you can experience what they did...'*. The non-theatre group emphasised the enjoyment and benefit of doing things (which the theatre group didn't have so much chance to experience): *'If it's say a hat, and you're looking at it, you don't get interested, but if you're wearing it ... then it's more a bigger deal...'*; *'In the classroom, the teacher might say, people had to wear helmets or carry wood planks, but like you don't know how heavy it was, or how hard, until you've tried it yourself'*. The captions on the children's drawings at PV2 also revealed what they liked (as well as what they remembered), resulting in circular explanations for their choices, along the lines of *'I like this because I remember it'*, or *'I remember this because I liked it'*.

2. Recall

- *Interviews at PV1:* The majority of children demonstrated very clear recall of what they had done and seen at the museum, albeit in a rather matter-of-fact style, with little commentary or further reflection on the significance or nature of this. The Co-op shop was most frequently mentioned among the most memorable exhibits, among both the theatre and non-theatre groups. In fact, the majority of children in the theatre group mentioned the Co-op shop before they recalled the performance or Gabrielle, possibly

because the shop was the first exhibit they saw (therefore the first thing that comes to mind on recollection?). Among the non-theatre group, children remembered most vividly what they had *done* (i.e. the activities they had taken part in and the interactive displays), as opposed to what they had *seen* or *heard* – e.g. both carrying wood and making boxes were most frequently recalled. Occasionally, a child cited elements of the visit which appeared to have some personal significance which was not revealed, *'I went into the shop to look at some things and then I waited in the passage...'*

- *Letters:* Many letters showed evidence of more imaginative recall of elements of their visit. For example, a number of children (non-theatre group) described how, as a newly arrived immigrant to Britain, they were working in a Co-op shop (or aspired to do so) or making boxes. Children in the theatre group remembered many details of Gabrielle's story (working in a tuna factory, living in Manchester, living with Victor) and incorporated these into their own narratives of adversity and/or contentment.
- *Pictures:* Although children's drawings are, of course, highly individual, overall those by the theatre group showed more detail and were more colourful. Many showed a high degree of recall, such as one of Gabrielle in her white and blue striped frock, holding an union flag for Empire Day and an envelope containing Victor's letter. Others depicted the Co-op shop with its shelves of groceries and old-fashioned cash register and scales.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Among the non-theatre group, elements of the museum visit were recalled in isolation, as if certain things/experiences had stuck in the mind, but more as fragments of experience, rather than as part of a whole visit. This may be due to the passage of time between this session and the visit itself: the interview transcripts show children casting back in their minds, and prompting each other when they are able to remember something. Through prompting each other in the interviews, the theatre group interviewees could reconstruct a lot of Gabrielle's story (first child: *'...there was her Dad'* then second child: *'Shirley as well'*). As in the first visit, among the non-theatre group, activities (doing, making, trying things on) were recalled more readily than things that were only *seen* or *heard* – (thus, making boxes, deal portering and the Co-op shop get more mentions than, say, the static exhibits or listening to Pete Brown, the education officer).
- *Pictures:* Some drawings depict children's general interests (e.g. football) rather than something special that they remembered in connection the museum visit. By contrast, the vividness and attention to detail of other drawings (again, showing Gabrielle in her blue and white dress and holding her letter, and the design and stock of the Co-op shop) demonstrates a high degree of engagement *and* recall – after over a month had passed since the visit to the museum. Perhaps it was surprising that only one pupil drew the teacher, Mr Howard, who had been exhorted to play the role of Gabrielle's friend Shirley. With the non-theatre group, doing things again prompted recall (*'I've drawn a box what we made because it was fun and we had to make it in 5 minutes so I remember it the most'*).

Two children's drawings in the non-theatre group depicted stories which Pete Brown told them (ie. the story of the bomb falling, and the naughty girls tying door knobs together). There is also a remarkably detailed portrait of Pete himself, which may suggest that the narrative/narrator is more memorable than objects for some children. Football was a very popular subject among theatre group – perhaps just because boys like drawing football pictures and, now that the visit was further in the past, football is more familiar/easier than remembering other features of the museum?

3. Understanding

- *Interviews at PV1:* The key questions at the centre of the Pump House visit were question 9, why did people come to the UK from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 10, what was life like for them in this country? So a big difference between the theatre and the non-theatre groups is that for the non-theatre group, the presentation of these issues constituted a much smaller part of the overall museum visit than was the case for the theatre group. The majority of children (in both groups) clearly understood that reasons for migration were primarily economic, although the expanding UK labour market in 1950s was frequently attributed to loss of population during WW2, rather than to an expanding economy and growth in standards of living. Generally, the broad significance of issues (e.g. that there were pros and cons to emigration to Britain) was more clearly grasped than detailed historical knowledge.
- *Letters:* The story about there being diamonds in pavement occurs in many (non-theatre) letters as a metaphor for life in Britain: those who are 'happy' quote it as a fact; those who are 'unhappy' cite it as another myth to lure people to UK.
- *Pictures:* There is little direct evidence of understanding as such from the drawings, which prompted recall and stimulated empathy, rather than revealed understanding of the wider issues raised by the visit.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Among the non-theatre group, answers to the question 'Why did people come to Britain from the Caribbean in the 1950s?' ranged from: '*They were bored [in the Caribbean] ... so they came for adventure*'; '*They wanted fighters*'; '*They heard that they had crystal floors...*'; '*Because [Britain] had better jobs and they wanted to see the world*'; '*Did we invite them over to help with the war?*'. By contrast, the answers of the theatre group were more confident and accurate, with the majority identifying post-war labour shortages in UK in their first answers (only one child thought that people came to fight in the War). The majority of children did not grasp the implication of the question 'Why did people come to Britain?' - that is, Britain as opposed to anywhere else - the significance of the British Empire had not really registered with them. Having said that, the fact that people had been 'invited' had registered with a few – even if they didn't understand the context of that invitation.

4. Connections made

- *Interviews at PV1:* The fairly extensive chronological sweep of the museum visit, which is represented in thematic and rather episodic displays (also reflected in the children's worksheets) seems to have produced a rather fragmented experience – especially for the theatre group (the performance was not explicitly integrated into other elements of the visit). Thus, the children show little sense of being able to distinguish historically between, say, the different decades that they explored (perhaps because to their young eyes, many of the displays consisted of equally arcane historical artefacts).
- *Letters:* There are many examples of how children referenced the entire museum experience (irrespective of historical context) as material for narrating stories of immigrants' experiences. For example, a number described both working in the Co-op and/or making boxes (for little money) in their letters home to the Caribbean, albeit with a variety of interpretations (some see making boxes as menial and not a 'proper job', while others declared themselves content to do such work).

- *Pictures*: There is not a great deal of direct evidence of the children making connections, with a couple of exceptions, e.g. '*This is the wireless, I have drawn this because it is fascinating how this turned into our modern radio*', plus an imaginative aerial depiction of the street where the bomb dropped (as described by Pete Brown) and '*a woman gave it to the museum after she had picked it up*'. Those drawings which depict the composite elements of the museum displays do not reveal any attempt to join up the pieces.
- *Interviews at PV2*: Again, there was evidence that the children had some difficulty in relating different parts of the visit ('*Everything was like in sections and things*'). For the theatre group, the performance appeared unconnected to the rest of the visit ('*...then we went and watched some of the play, and then we'll go and look at some more things, and you'll come back and do the play*'). For this group, Gabrielle's story was again the touchstone for thinking about wider issues arising from the immigrant experience ('*... she thought that England was like all good, but there are some bad points of it*').

5. Surprise

- *Interviews at PV1*: Among the both the theatre and the non-theatre group, diverse exhibits were regarded as surprising, either because they were not the kinds of things the children expected to see in a museum ('*The men had to carry these pieces across the ship on this thing and fall into the dirty water*'), or because they did not know such things existed, such as the shops without barcodes and without freezers, 1950s football boots, the small size of rooms (in fact, of course these were just sections of rooms presented as stage sets) and '*a wireless doesn't have any wires in it*'.

Some displays were viewed as being 'strange' (generally a derogatory perception) - including making boxes and the old fashioned boots - because they were outside the children's previous experience. None of the children in the theatre group registered surprise at the performance of Gabrielle's story (presumably because they now viewed that as being at central to their visit).

- *Letters*: There is little direct evidence of surprise at the museum visit in the letters, but there is more extensive evidence of surprise at the conditions that immigrants to the UK encountered in the 1950s, including experience of racism (which many thought was worse in the 1950s than today).
- *Pictures*: No evidence about connections.
- *Interviews at PV2*: There was not a great deal of evidence of surprise/lack of surprise - the questions 'what surprised you during your visit?' and 'was it what you expected?' often did not elicit very illuminating replies. Some children seemed unsure of what to answer, others answered in reference to different museums that they had visited, and others didn't seem to have a benchmark against which they could measure their surprise (or lack of it). However, one child said that he had expected the Pump House to be a '*sort of water works factory or something*' and another said that he '*...thought there would be like some better stuff*' (although when pressed, he could not be more specific).

The majority in the non-theatre group said that they were surprised that they were allowed so much freedom to do things - in the words of one child, '*But they let us mess with the stuff and not many museums do that.*' In general, the children much appreciated the relaxed atmosphere of the Pump House - and saw it as a major aid to learning: '*...In the classroom you just get taught stuff, but in a museum you get to have fun as well*'. None of the theatre group interviews expressed surprise at seeing a play in the museum - although when prompted, they admitted that they *hadn't* expected it. Perhaps this

indicates their inability to isolate the play as a distinct aspect of their experience of the museum as a whole. With reference to the structure of the museum visit, some children were (pleasantly) surprised that they didn't have to spend their entire visit in the education room.

6. Ownership and Empathy

- *Interviews at PV1:* The question 'What advice would you give to someone considering leaving the Caribbean for the UK' evoked superficial empathy, with mixed opinions as to whether emigration brought advantages or disadvantages (e.g. do come because the jobs are better; don't come because you'll miss your family). The question about 'relevance' of what they learned (to their own lives) provoked mixed answers: some were a bit uncertain, but generally there was a desire to try and make connections between past and present. Often, this appeared to be a rather surprising concept. There was also evidence of a failure to empathise - for example, many references to contemporary material culture (e.g. absence of colour television) and technology (e.g. barcodes in shops) contrast life today with life in the past. The differences between then and now (outweighing the similarities) were revealed in the children's language – e.g. 'them' and 'us.'
- *Letters:* Empathy with the issues faced by immigrants to UK was generally strong (if sometimes imaginative!) in the letters. The authors were generally very sympathetic to issues facing immigrants. The story of Gabrielle provided an explicit narrative which the theatre group drew in their letters home (e.g. references to her blue and white dress, tuna factory, Victor, moving to Manchester etc). The non-theatre group did not have reference to this single, powerful narrative, so took a more 'pick'n'mix' approach to their museum experience to construct letters which refer to, for example, working in the co-op, making boxes, snow ball fights, diamonds in the pavement etc. Despite the tensions within the drama, there is little more evidence of ambivalence aroused by the experience of migration among the theatre group than the non-theatre group.
- *Pictures:* Among the theatre group, five drew pictures of Gabrielle, three of which included the children themselves dancing. Experiences of participation and role-play seemed to stay in the mind and be significant – for these three children *their* interaction with Gabrielle was the aspect of the drama that they wanted to record (it was a part of the performance which they did not watch as an audience, and so which they have visualised differently from those children who drew Gabrielle by herself). In the non-theatre group, doing things and 'trying things on' are similarly memorable and significant – the most popular drawing at PV1 was the helmet or deal-porters hat which they had tried on. Drawings which include self-portraits (serving in shop, wearing helmet, pressing the green button etc) suggest empathy with the people who did/wore these things (note the impact of role play in the museum). *'This is me wearing a helmet. I drew this picture because I can imagine someone defending their country wearing this helmet'*
- *Interviews at PV2:* The question 'what was it life in Britain like for people coming from the Caribbean in the 50s?' prompted generally emphatic answers ('*hard*', '*terrifying*', '*annoying*', '*hard*'). The issue of racism was frequently raised too – often with the explanation that there was more racism in the 1950s because British people weren't used to the presence of black people. Overall, the children have little hesitation in imagining '*what it would have been like...*' although some answers also reflect both good and bad aspects of life in the UK. Having been prompted to recall Gabrielle's story (in question 1), the theatre group interviewees tended to empathise with *her* narrative, for example generalising from her experience in answer to the questions 'what was life like?' and 'how did [immigrants] feel?'. Often the children answered in the third person singular

– 'she' (ie Gabrielle who may have become a kind of 'Everywoman' for them). By contrast, the non-theatre group did not have such a clear point of reference, and their answers are both more speculative and more varied.

7. Inspiration/motivation to want to know more

- *Interviews at PV1:* Many answers reflected a sense of wanting to find out more about or understand what daily life was *really* like – as if the children had only had a tantalising glimpse of some deeper truth in the museum. Some of the topics that inspired curiosity were rather marginal to the central themes of the visit (e.g. wanting to find out more about the King or about a display of trade union badges which were not part of the visit at all). Overall, there is little sense of the children have been *inspired* by their visit, although their appetite for knowledge had been whetted (*'I wanted to learn more about Mr Churchill [and Mr Atlee] ...I found that interesting ...', 'I would have like to learn more about what it was like when people worked in factories'*).
- *Letters:* There is greater evidence of inspiration in the letters, many of which contain a high degree of vivid recall and, as discussed above, empathy. Clearly, the visit inspired many children to reflect their newly acquired knowledge and understanding in creative narration. This is equally true of both groups, with some children from each group writing particularly thoughtful letters.
- *Pictures:* No direct evidence.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Little direct evidence, as the questions did not raise this issue.

Summary of Oswald Road Junior responses

Main *similarities* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

Interview question	Theatre and Non-theatre groups
2	Co-op shop most frequently cited; also Gabrielle, Pete Brown, doing things and the rooms in the museum
4	Diversity of responses, some not quite accurate ('because of the war'), most broadly correct (i.e. for a better life, etc)
5	Many mentions of excitement in anticipation of a better life, followed by some disappointment with the reality they found in Britain
9	Very positive about value of learning from the 'real thing' in museums, and because it's 'fun' (unlike school)

Main *differences* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

Interview question	Theatre group	Non-theatre group
2	Gabrielle mentioned by many, but usually after Co-op shop etc	Strong recall of participatory activities (making boxes, carrying wood, trying on hats etc)
4	In addition to general reasons for coming, specific references to Gabrielle's invitation from Victor	Answers more vague, less historically accurate. Greater confusion about the need for immigrants to fight in the war

6		More mentions of people being 'invited' to come to Britain
7	Very balanced suggestions of pros and cons of emigration	Less thoughtful responses with fewer references to family and friends, as opposed to material factors
8	Difficulties of life in Britain directly related to Gabrielle's story	More references to racism and its causes
9	Emphasis on the importance of the 'real thing'	Very positive about learning through doing and by having fun

Response to interviews at PV2 compared with PV1:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
Gabrielle's story recalled through discussion and prompting. Other aspects of the museum (eg. Co-op shop) also remain vivid	Detailed recall of the activities in the museum; less accurate recall of other aspects of interpretation
Gabrielle used as reference point for historical interpretation, sometimes failing to relate the particular to the general	Memories and ideas fragmented at PV2, when recall of the contextual framework had faded
Inability to relate Gabrielle's story to the wider historical narratives of the museum	Inaccuracies in PV1 still present at PV2

Complementary activities at PV2 compared with PV1:

No direct comparisons can be drawn between PV1 and PV2 since the letters were only undertaken during PV1; and significantly more time was allowed for pictures at PV2 than at PV1. Many of the PV2 pictures do contain a good deal of detail suggesting strong evidence of clear recall and of interest in the subject-matter. Some of the pupils were not identifiable (had omitted names on pictures) while others submitted work at PV2 but not at PV1. So the statistics are somewhat random: they do not robustly demonstrate changes in specific pupils' responses, only a general trend based on a small sample.

However, the tendencies noted here may be suggestive when matched by similar tendencies in groups from other schools and in groups attending the IWM:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
The majority did not draw Gabrielle at PV1 or PV2	Elements of museum visit (single artefacts) and also composite views of the museum depicted in detail at PV1
Football was a popular subject for boys at both PV1 and PV2.	Many drew things that they had done (including self-portraits) at PV2
More drew the Co-op shop at both PV1 and PV2 than in the non-theatre group	2 drawings of the school coach at PV1, and 6 drawings of the helmet (most popular exhibit)
	Strong recall of narratives and ability to visualise stories at PV2

4.4.3 Additional observations on responses from both PHM schools

One of the teachers from Medlock Primary, Tony Shilling, identified the ways in which history teaching had developed at the school in recent years, becoming more integrated with other elements of the curriculum, especially artwork; he also recognised the difficulties many children had with grasping 'time lines' and the tendency of many to confuse different periods.

Shilling stressed the powerful impact of Gabrielle's story upon most of the pupils who had experienced it: the very '*personal*' dimension she brought to the story of migration, her '*feelings*' about '*what was happening to her at the time*', which corresponded closely with the school's own approaches to history, looking for the emotional and creative angles, out of which '*there's that bigger chance of understanding [history]*'. He confirmed the considerable degree of recall, usually related directly to Gabrielle (whom they talked about a lot back in school), but also to memories of the shop and living room. Interactive activities are an important part of the teaching strategy and the museum visit complemented this extremely well. The highly vocal response of the pupils during the performance was, in his view, just a further indication of how much they were connecting directly with the performance and with the issues the story was raising.

A sense of 'ownership' was corroborated too by the ways in which pupils referred to Gabrielle not only to illustrate what they were learning generally about Caribbean immigration, but also when talking about the clothes she wore and even the style of performance which had clearly impressed them. '*They all thought [she] was great, they never shut up about her*'; and comments such as '*she did it all in the same place, didn't she, she didn't have a set, like on telly*'. They were discussing the event for many weeks: '*at least two weeks later it was still alive and on the tips of their tongue. Which is a long time... for these pupils*'.

A number of general points emerge which apply to both schools, notably:

- Due to the pressures of the school timetable, there was less time for interviews at the PV1 stage than we would have liked. With sometimes little more than ten minutes to cover all the ground, there was no time for supplementary questions or to press pupils for details or for reasons why they said what they did: there was little opportunity for them to expand on their comments. This was, however, balanced by the different format of the PV2 interviews, which were more productive with increased probing and increased opportunity to develop points made, and with a greater time-lapse since the museum experience for things either to 'settle' or to disappear from pupils' minds. Such factors can be ameliorated in the planned Phase Three of the research, to be undertaken over a longer timescale.
- The relative lack of time for drawing pictures at PV1 compared with PV2 must be taken into account when assessing recall, attention to detail, etc. PV1 pictures mostly seem to reflect what has taken children's immediate interest. The PV2 pictures provide more clues about the vividness with which children recalled their experience and the interest/engagement with the subject of their picture.
- The factor of 'prior knowledge' and other external sources of information will have influenced some of the responses, especially concerning attitudes to immigration and 'home'. Our 'baseline' sessions were designed to ascertain this, which, to a limited extent, they did - especially in respect of attitudes and knowledge prevalent in the class as a whole. The baseline sessions did not however enable us to access prior knowledge on an individual basis - thus, for those children whose parents are immigrants, there may have been personal reasons for their strong feelings or ambivalence about Britain as 'home', distinct that is from the particular 'theatre' or 'non-theatre' experience. This may perhaps explain one of the more marked differences between the Medlock and Oswald Road pupils: the theatre group at Medlock - but not at Oswald Road - offered more reasons for a Caribbean *not* to come to Britain, and a rather wider range of ideas about what it would have felt like when here than did the non-theatre group. Such conversations at home and in other ways outside the reach of the investigation are of

course an inevitable part of the process by which learning, informal as well as formal, takes place; they also constitute a factor that naturalistic enquiry of this kind cannot readily identify and should certainly not try to eliminate. Indeed, it is quite likely that many of those conversations will have been triggered by the events under scrutiny.

- The apparent confusion many children showed about chronology may derive not only from a lack of historical understanding but, more positively, from the fact that the 1950s as witnessed in the museum, and as explained in the first person by Gabrielle, was in a sense, for them, 'now' as well as 'then'. Likewise, the Caribbean was both 'there' and – imaginatively – 'here' at one and the same time.
- Some of the confusions evident about what the pupils saw at the museum and the significance attached to elements of the collection derive, again, not necessarily from a failure of understanding, but from the tendency of young visitors often to 'read' an exhibit in rather different ways than do adults (with their prior knowledge of the period): everything in the frame can sometimes have equal significance, irrespective of the designer's intentions. Thus, the button on the wall of the 1950s living room signified for many an everyday 1950s device for switching on a radio, not a special museum device to bring an exhibit to life.



Figure 5d: The wartime helmet. (Pump House Museum. Oswald Road Junior: non- theatre group, PV-2.) Caption reads: 'This is me wearing a helmet. I drew this picture because I can just imagine someone defending their country wearing this helmet.'

4.5 Research at the Imperial War Museum (IWM)

4.5.1 IWM theatre session, the 1940s House

'The 1940s Experience' is set in the back-garden of 17 Braemar Gardens: a recreated life-size, semi-detached house typical of the pre-war period, linked with the Channel Four series *The 1940s House* [see Fig. 4]. Pupils are met by an actor in role and told about everyday life in the Second World War, including rationing and the threat of bombing. The session lasts under thirty minutes and can only take 19 pupils and 1 adult, and unlike the Model House Project costs £50 per group. It is targeted at KS2 pupils studying 'Britain since 1930s', though it is described as also suitable for KS3 and GCSE students, and some NVQ students have also taken part. The session is provided by Spectrum, a theatre company which provides actor-interpreters for a variety of roles at the IWM, such as the Blitz Experience and the Trench Experience, and for a variety of other museums. Four different actresses perform the 1940s Experience, and though all follow the same basic framework, the actual performances and narratives vary considerably. The same actress was used for both of our research sessions. Normally the pupils have an opportunity to walk through the house before being met by the actress. The house has three rooms downstairs, and three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, although most of the rooms are observed rather than entered. The house does not contain any interpretation, but period music plays constantly and it is surrounded by a gallery of exhibits relating to daily life during the Second World War.

The performer for our research sessions – in role throughout as 'Muriel', the mother of the family living at the house – greeted the pupils as if they were friends of her sons, who were out at school at that time. The session was conversational in style and varied in content from performance to performance, partly depending on the level of knowledge that the pupils displayed in response to various questions the performer asked them. The more pupils appeared to know, the more in-depth the performance became. Topics embraced the blackout, rationing, and bombing (including, as the performance is set in 1944, the new V2 rockets). Some reference was made to the house and the garden (for example, a mistake over blacking-out the small pantry window which led to a £5 fine, or a black line painted on to the bath to indicate how much water was allowed). The performance was stationary and never moved from the garden back into the house, though at the end the actress sometimes escorted the group round to the front of the house to say goodbye. A set of worksheets was available which related to the house, but none were specific to the 1940s Experience.



Figure 4: The 1940s House

4.5.2 IWM non-theatre session, the Model House Project

The Model House Project is a long-running, permanent and popular feature of the IWM education programme. It is a free pre-booked session that runs for 90 minutes and is described as suitable for Years 4 –7 KS2 pupils studying 'Britain since 1930.' The session is centred on a model of a London house shown as it was during the Second World War, and is divided into three sections, which the pupils work through in rotation in three groups of up to ten. The session takes place in an education room away from the main galleries, and the model house is not on display to the general public.

Approximately twenty minutes is allowed for each section, with a fifteen-minute introduction and ten-minute conclusion.

1. The introduction explains what is going to happen in the session, and provides a little information about the model house and its family.
2. The first section is with the model house itself, which is contained in a large display case (circa 2 metres square) and extremely detailed. The pupils make use of a worksheet with various questions relating to the house, such as:
 - what changes had been made for the war?
 - how many people were living in the house?
 - what was each room used for?
3. The second section is based around the handling of various artefacts used in Air Raid Precautions (ARP):
 - a firebomb
 - stirrup pump
 - bucket
 - shovel
 - a selection of gas masks (including a baby's gas mask with a doll to put inside it.)

There are also various posters and photographs about the artefacts or showing them in use, plus a worksheet asking pupils to draw one of the gas masks and decide who would have worn it.

4. In the third section, pupils work in pairs and are given bags relating to different members of the Allpress family, who lived in the house that the model recreates. In each bag are documents relating to different family members, including Mrs Allpress and three of their ten children. For example, Mr Allpress, a train driver, has in his bag:
 - a copy of the family tree (as do all the bags)
 - a photograph of himself and his wife
 - a booklet entitled '*The British Railways can take it*'
 - an photograph of a bombed train and station
 - a cigarette card album and a gas mask

Worksheet questions relating to Mr Allpress include his dates of birth and marriage, why train drivers were important during the war, and what jobs women did on the railways during the war.

The concluding part of the session reveals that the man who made the model actually married one of the Allpress daughters, and still occasionally visits the IWM to 'check up on his model'.

4.6 Participating schools at IWM

4.6.1 Hermitage Primary School

Hermitage Primary School is a mixed school in Tower Hamlets with 273 pupils, 1 SEN pupil with statement and 49 without. The size of the school means that Years 5 and 6 are taught in mixed year group classes. Over 90% of pupils are from a Bangladeshi background, and many have English as a second language. The school prides itself on having an open friendly atmosphere and, of the four schools used in the research, it is the only one where pupils address teachers by their first name. The two classes were broadly similar, the most notable difference being that the 'non-theatre' class had slightly more Year 6 children, and so a higher average age than the 'theatre' class. The mixed age classes appear not to cause too many difficulties, partly because of the wide range of pupils within the school already.

The teaching of history here is often workshop-based initially, using 'hands on' object work or videos, rather than more traditional written work. The non-English cultural background of the majority of the children means that families cannot provide the same support for topics such as Britain in the 1940s.

The school supports visits to museums, and the children had made many visits, including several other visits to museums and a theatre during the course of the research. They also had involvement in a wide range of arts projects, ranging from musicians from Guildhall University to a two-year involvement in a literacy project run by the National Theatre. Several theatre-in-education companies had also visited the school.

The children had not studied Britain in World War Two before the visit, and did little follow-up work other than the research session.

4.6.2. Headington Junior School

Headington Junior School is a selective, fee-paying, independent girl's school on the outskirts of Oxford, with 230 pupils and an all-female staff of 22. Class sizes are considerably smaller than with the other three schools participating in our research, and the resources of the school appear considerably higher. The majority of the pupils come from Oxford or the surrounding villages. Although the school has good academic standard and results, it prides itself on providing an all-round education, with a wide range of music and performing-arts activities, within a family-like atmosphere. It is located in a converted large Victorian house, which contributes to the homely atmosphere. The school expects some level 6 SAT scores in English and maths, and approximately 90% and 80% level 5 scores for maths and English respectively. Most of the pupils remain in the school from the year 1 to year 6, but some join in year 5 or 6, particularly if they want to go to Headington School, which Headington Junior School feeds.

The children appear to have a relatively privileged upbringing, indicated by the range of international museums that they discussed having visited in the pre-visit session. They also receive parental support, and in the teaching of history they are encouraged to involve their parents. For the Britain since the 1940s topic, several brought in artefacts and one child's grandfather who had been a prisoner-of-war came in to talk to the class about his first-hand experiences. The teaching of history is project-based and uses art to a large extent. The visit to the IWM had been booked during the summer and the pupils had done five weeks work on Britain during WWII, so had by far the greatest prior knowledge of the topic of all the schools used in the research.

Each year group will make on average two trips per term, complementing the children's private visits to museums with family and friends. Several of the pupils had already been to the IWM. Drama is used extensively in the school, with yearly productions by each year group and Royal Shakespeare Company actors running workshops during the summer term.

4.7 Pre-visit sessions at the IWM schools

- **Hermitage**

Due to the late participation of Hermitage School and the illness of a member of staff, neither class teacher had seen the pre-visit information that had been sent to the schools. This meant that neither teacher was really expecting the research visit, but both were as obliging as possible. The non-theatre group had a whole class discussion about their experience of museums, and showed some work they had done following a museum visit the previous week. As they had not studied Britain during WWII, the class teachers felt it unfair to spend too much time discussing this area. Both classes then performed an assembly that they had performed for the school that morning, looking at the changes that had taken place in Britain since 1950 in music, dance, fashion, politics and other significant events.

- **Headington**

This was the only school used in the research where the two classes were mixed to form the theatre and non-theatre groups (both classes were broadly similar). In the pre-visit session, the first class was told the aims for the session: to share your thoughts on and experience of visiting museums; to find out how much you know about the 1940's. They then discussed as a class their wide range of experience of visiting museums and what they thought museums were for. This was then followed by a 'closed book' test on the 1940's, which most did very well on, and the answers of which were then discussed as a group. The second class were initially given a A3 sheet with questions (written in calligraphy) about museums which they answered in pairs before discussing the answers as a class. They then completed the same quiz as the first class. Both classes finished the sessions by discussing what they had most enjoyed learning about when studying the 1940s – Anne Frank being popular with both classes.

4.8 Analysis of pupils' responses at IWM

We analysed two sets of post visit interview responses (PV1 and PV2) from schools who visited the Pump House Museum, along with the complementary activities: pictures drawn and letters written at PV1 and pictures with captions drawn at PV2. This commentary may be compared with the summary charts in Appendix D⁸.

Key	
PV1	Post-visit 1: the first set of interviews and complementary activities at each school, usually within two days of the museum visit.
PV2	Post-visit 2: the second set of interviews and complementary activities at each school, usually between six and eight weeks after the museum visit.
Theatre group	Pupils who received the 1940s House theatre programme as part of their visit.
Non-theatre group	Pupils who followed the Model House Project tour

Questions asked at PV1 and PV2 interviews following IWM visit (for reference)

IWM Post-Visit 1

1. What is your name?
2. What did you do at the museum?
3. Which parts of the session (i.e. 1940's Experience or Model House Session) did you particularly like?
4. Which parts of the session did you particularly dislike?
5. Did you find out anything that surprised you (that you didn't know before)?
6. Was there anything you would have liked to learn more about?
7. Who do you know who was alive during the Second World War?
8. What problems faced people during the Second World War?
9. How did people feel during the Second World War?
10. When advice would you have given them?
11. What was it like for children during the Second World War?
12. Are the things we learnt at the museum important or just history?

IWM Post-Visit 2

1. What is your name?
2. What did you do at the museum?
3. Were you surprised by what you did in the session (i.e. 1940's Experience or Model House Session)?
4. How did the war change the lives of people in Britain?
5. How might they have felt?
6. If I was a parent with children your age living in the Britain during the Second World War what advice would you give me?
7. Some people say that museum visits are a waste of time and you can learn just as well in the classroom. What do you think?

For the full list of questions asked at the research interviews, see Appendix E.

⁸ The transcripts of the interviews conducted with pupils, education officers and performers, and the children's pictures and letters, are all stored in the CATR Archive at Manchester University Department of Drama, where they may, by prior arrangement, be viewed by *bona fide* researchers.

4.8.1 Commentary on Hermitage School at IWM

1. Experience of the museum

- *Interviews at PV1:* For both groups, the visit to the museum appeared to be a popular experience. The theatre group liked the Trench, the toy-box upstairs in the 1940's House and the actress. In the non-theatre group, six individuals mentioned the Model House (*'I liked the model house because it was good, and I thought the person worked really hard, it was very good'; 'I liked looking in the dolls house 'cos there were even real toothbrushes, and there was real sand in real buckets, it was really cool'*). For dislikes, one theatre group member commented on too much walking around – possibly a response to the problems with the timing of the session resulting in much aimless wandering after the session had finished. From the non-theatre group, comments included too much listening (*'I didn't like it when we had to just sit down and listen'*), and one who wanted to *'talk to my friends, learn and then like not do the sheet'*.
- *Letters:* Little direct evidence as written in character.
- *Pictures:* These showed little direct evidence, especially as the theatre group only produced two pictures at PV1, compared to the non-theatre group's 26. This was partly as the theatre group spent more time on letters, and partly because the non-theatre group worked on the pictures before the letters. At PV2, many non-theatre group children produced identical pictures and many produced no picture.
- *Interviews at PV2:* There was indirect evidence here from the theatre group: *'You can learn new things that the teachers don't know and stuff, and museums are interesting and exciting'; 'They show it properly and here in school they just say it to you'; 'It's like proper truth, 'cos teachers don't always tell the truth, and you can actually see some of the real things without having to like imagine it'*. The non-theatre group also showed indirect evidence: *'It's really fun and exciting, I mean, like, just say it's The Imperial War Museum, it's got er, like the Trench, where people think it's really exciting thing'; 'It was better in the Imperial War Museum, because you get to see the real, you get to see like all the planes, and you get to see like, um, rifles, real rifles which men used'*. There were two dissenting voices in the theatre group, one complaining that it was too hot in the museum and one that too many museums have similar collections.

2. Recall

- *Interviews at PV1:* Recall from the theatre group was fairly good, with the house, shelter, bath and actress being mentioned by most pupils, but their recall was on a rather superficial level: *'One of the things she told us is her son drew a line on the bath, and it was about 5cm long from the bottom of the bath, that's how much water you could put in, and when we went into the garden, she told us not to touch the lamp post or it would fall, and she told us that she never painted the, one of the windows black, and er, these people took £3 from them'*. A common confusion in the theatre group, for example, was that you had to put up blackout curtains otherwise you would be fined, not because it would help prevent being bombed.

Recall in the non-theatre group was also quite good in terms of what they did at the museum, perhaps helped by the fact that the Model House session was all they did at the museum, so they had a much more structured overall visit. The Model House and Allpress family received the greatest number of mentions.

- *Letters:* The letters from both groups are quite varied in the level of recall, with the theatre group talking mainly about evacuation, conditions in air raid shelters, rationing and water shortages. The non-theatre group has more letters that are way off subject, including evacuation to China and Afghanistan, and tower blocks being bombed (this was very close to the September 11 2001 events).
- *Pictures:* The non-theatre group produced some good drawing showing a good level of recall, especially of the ARP equipment, firebomb and gas masks. For PV2 the level of recall was much lower, with all but two pictures unrelated to the visit. PV2 theatre group pictures showed a good level of recall, with the bath and the air raid shelter being drawn, though many children drew a gas mask, which they hadn't seen of the visit but which was in the classroom.
- *Interviews at PV2:* The recall from the theatre group was good, with comparable recall from those interviewed in PV1 and those not. Most remembered seeing some combination of the house, the bath, the air raid shelter and the actress (*'This lady's house. Yeah, that was a good one, a lady's house, she showed us like, black-outs, and she showed us the bath, she showed us the air raid sirens, she showed us this little lantern thing'*). The non theatre group were more vague in their descriptions, and needed more prompting: *'We were learning about the World War Two'; 'We just looked around the trench sort of thing, and we looked at like mini models of all the rooms, and about the Holocaust, and the model house and things'*. Fewer children from the non-theatre group mentioned the Model House than mentioned the 1940s House in the theatre group.

3. Understanding

- *Interviews at PV1:* The level of understanding varied greatly, with significant numbers having a clear understanding of the problems facing people during WWII but other showing confusion. This was particularly marked in the non-theatre group with confusion over rations and the whether Britain was invaded: *'And you have to like hide yourself from all the like, like, the, the Nazis'; 'When like somebody from their family went out and suddenly like someone, the Germans, but Germans came and found them and they took them away'; 'Until you get the other [ration] book, in the next year'*. This confusion could also be seen in the question about the advice they'd give: *'Germans and people like in case they, they capture you or something'; 'I would tell them to wear armour'*.

The theatre group often referred to the actress in their explanations (*'She told us if the bomb, if they bombed and they didn't get a direct hit on the bomb shelter, they wouldn't blow it up but a direct hit and it would blow up'; 'The lady told me she couldn't sleep 'cos of the bombing, and um, the ladies had to the men's jobs, like making guns, and men were at the War'*) or they quoted things that she told them (*'Oh well there was less water to bathe in, and they had to squash up in the bomb shelter, and, the black-outs, they had to put gas masks on them'*) and seemed to have a much better understanding.

- *Letters:* The theatre group letters generally present a coherent, reasonable picture of wartime life. They miss their parents, complain about food shortages and occasionally have to use next door's shelter. The non-theatre group letters are much more violent and confused, with German tanks in the streets in one letter, and perhaps represent a more modern version of warfare. (See also 'Recall')
- *Pictures:* In the non-theatre group, there was evidence of a lack of understanding in many of the pictures, with several modern guns being drawn and a Russian 'plane bombing a tower block. There was not an equivalent lack of understanding in the theatre group.

- *Interviews at PV2:* Both groups gave mostly sensible answers, with the blackout, bombing, rations, evacuation, women's war work and water shortages mentioned most often by the theatre group, and rations, bombing, 'make-do-and-mend' and blackout by the non theatre group. There was evidence in both groups that they had related their understanding to the visit: *'I think people felt quite like shocked at first, well she's used to go like as in, like deep baths, and as in, real big dinners, and being able to go shopping and out without seeing like the shops like being bombed down'; 'She said to us that um, every time the air raid siren went off, they had to run to the air raid shelters, so that, so they wouldn't get hurt with the bombs that people threw down, and she told us, she told us about um, the bath, that you couldn't put that much, about the, there was a line in the bath, and that meant that you could only put water above that because they don't want to waste the water'; 'I think it was because, the children couldn't go out and play on the streets, so they were like, they were really captured in, the Allpress family, the teenager girl, um, she, she couldn't go out shopping and do teenager things like that, that she would do.'* There were also answers indicating a lack of understanding: one child, for example, advised hard work in order to buy more ration tickets.

4. Connections made

- *Interviews at PV1:* There is little direct evidence for connections, though the theatre group do connect elements of the performance with the house: *'She was telling everything she does in the house, and how much, how much people lives in the house, and things like that, how much children she has in the house'; 'They never really had much metal in the house, 'cos it was all given away.'* The non-theatre group appear not to connect the three activities, or suitable questions were not asked to enable them to express that. One child, however, commented on the fact that the husband of one of the Allpress children made the model house: *'Well I know who the um, the person who modelled it um, his wife lived in the house, she, he, she was one of the child, (pause) don't know what I liked about it.'*
- *Letters:* No direct evidence.
- *Pictures:* No direct evidence
- *Interviews at PV2:* No direct evidence (see 'Understanding' above). Often the visit would be discussed in terms of an unrelated list: *'We just looked around the trench sort of thing, and we looked at like mini models of all the rooms, and about the Holocaust, and the model house and things'* but the children were not asked to relate the different aspects of the visit at any point.

5. Surprise

- *Interviews at PV1:* The non-theatre group expressed no surprise - though the question's phrasing did not necessarily elicit the right response here. The theatre group were surprised at the house (in general), the amount of bath water allowed, and the trench, though not more specifically than that. There was no opportunity given by the questions to register surprise at what they were doing at the museum.
- *Letters:* No direct evidence.
- *Pictures:* One child from the theatre class drew a lantern with the caption *'Because we have those in Bangladesh and I didn't know we have it in olden times I was surprised!'*

- *Interviews at PV2:* Members of the theatre group expressed surprise at the differences between the 1940s and now, and when pressed some expressed surprise at the house and the actress: *'I didn't expect like the lady to wear them kind of clothes'; 'I didn't expect a whole house'*. The non-theatre group expressed surprise at handling objects and being given original documents relating to the Allpress family: *'I thought we'd just be looking around the trench, and having a look at the museum, but never going in and touching a real bomb'; 'We were actually holding like their own possessions, which they had while they were in the War'*.

6. Ownership and Empathy

- *Interviews at PV1:* Not a great deal of evidence was forthcoming, though the theatre group discussion was perhaps more animated. In the non-theatre group, WWII is related to one girl's grandfather. The one area where ownership is very much in evidence is in answer to the question about why the things they learnt at the museum were important: here, six of the non-theatre group and three of the theatre group said that it was important in case we had another war to know what to do.

In terms of the generation of empathy, again there was little direct evidence from the interviews, though answers gave the impression of empathy in the theatre group: *'The black-out, and they had to all squash up into that small area... and it was all smoke everywhere so they had to wear gas masks'; 'The lady told me she couldn't sleep 'cos of the bombing'; 'That lady left the curtains open, only one of them, she couldn't see. Then her, other people came and see, and gave them a fine, and her Dad wanted to rip her head off'; 'I think they was scared going to the foster family 'cos they don't really know them, and, 'cos there's gonna be other older children, I think they were scared of them, but they get used to it.'* This empathy was not so apparent in the non-theatre group, and some responses to the advice question shows a distinct lack of it: *'Can't think of any. Well I was not born'*. A few did indicate sympathy: *'The bombs and I felt sorry for the children, because they didn't get to do anything, they nearly died'*.

- *Letters:* A larger number of the non-theatre group letters are general, or don't relate to war from a WWII perspective, so it seems that they have related the WWII events to their own experience without enough knowledge of the historical material. Empathy is perhaps more apparent in the theatre group letters.
- *Pictures:* The small number of pictures produced by the non-theatre group at PV2 may perhaps indicate a lack of ownership. One child produced a drawing of a shotgun with the caption *'I like guns because they are really nice. Some guns look nice and they interest me.'* The theatre group certainly took much more care over the PV2 pictures than the non-theatre group. There are no self portraits. Equally, there was no direct evidence of empathy in the pictures.
- *Interviews at PV2:* Members of the theatre group appeared to relate the experience of going to the museum to their own lives. For example, in response to questions (4) and (5), responses included: *'I know I was surprised, unhappy, hungry, scared [of] the bombs, ... and stuff like, the bullets and stuff, and all the bangs going off, and stuff was frightening. 'Cos when you go in the Blitz, or in the Trench, you heard all these guns going [off], and one member of the non-theatre group saw herself in the future in the Allpress family's situation: 'It's a family from that time, you've got so much history about them, you might think they might, might be like in 2009, people will be looking at us, going, oh!'*

There is considerably more empathy demonstrated by the theatre group, particularly in answer to question (5) ('how might they have felt?'). Theatre group answers showed a level of emotional content ('*very sad, frightened of the bombs and, always like unhappy inside, they're hungry, and, and they weren't allowed to go outside, so, they weren't that free*'; '*I think people felt quite like shocked at first, well she's used to go like as in, like deep baths, and as in, real big dinners, and being able to go shopping and out without seeing like the shops like being bombed down*'; '*I think it was just a real big change from like having, like being, I mean everything in the world that you could wish for, and then having nothing*'; '*They must have felt like sad, and scared 'cos they actually every time they hear an air raid siren, they have to go and run in the thing, like how will I like, and their fathers are going in the Army, and working for the, working for the country*'). Non-theatre group answers tended to be less empathic - '*You never know that there, there's gonna be a bomb somewhere that maybe is explode, and like you're in bed, and it just explodes in your house, and you're dead*' - and more stated that people would be shocked/scared etc. without giving particular reasons why.

7. Inspiration/motivation to want to know more

- *Interviews at PV1*: Little indication, though some non-theatre group children wanted more handling of artefacts, and to know more about the Model House and how people used to live.
- *Letters*: No direct evidence.
- *Pictures*: Five identical drawings from the non-theatre group had the caption '*An awesome fighter plane which inspired me so much*', perhaps suggesting that the inspiration was minimal.
- *Interviews at PV2*: No direct evidence.

Summary of Hermitage Junior School responses

Main *similarities* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

<i>Interview question asked</i>	<i>Theatre and Non-theatre groups</i>
2	Few similarities – saw trench/large exhibits/1940's House
4	Many mentioned blackout, bombing and rations as problems that people faced during WWII
5	Most mentioned scared, many mention children would miss parents if evacuated
6	Many mentions of evacuated children or stay with children
7	Most said that museums were good because see things in real life or that you teachers cannot tell you about

Main *differences* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

<i>Interview question</i>	<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
2	More mentions of 1940s House/actress/shelter	More mentions of model house/learning about Allpress family
3	More surprise at difference between 1940s and now	Surprise at handling 'real' things

4	More changes to people's lives during WWII given	
5	More in-depth discussion of feelings given	Less justification for answers
7	More associated with learning.	More felt museums show things in 'real life'

Response to interviews at PV2 compared with PV1:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
Broadly comparable to PV1 visit	Less willing to discuss at length.
	Referred to session less.
	More prompting required

Complementary activities at PV2 compared with PV1:

<i>Theatre group</i>	<i>Non-theatre group</i>
Only two pictures were drawn in PV1	PV2 pictures did not relate strongly to the visit
PV2 pictures and comments much better	

4.8.2 Commentary on Headington School at IWM

1. *Experience of the museum*

- *Interviews at PV1:* For both theatre and non-theatre groups, the museum experience appeared a positive one, particularly for the theatre group. Both groups liked the submarine (five mentions from theatre group and three from the other group) and the 1940s House (this was mentioned twice by the non-theatre group, even though they only walked passed it). The Channel Four television connection may have had a bearing on this specific interest. The actress was also very popular with the theatre group. The questions gave no opportunity to express like or dislike of museum as whole. 'Hearing stories' was the most popular specific activity for the theatre group, with 'feeling that you were there' or 'seeing the real thing' second. For the non-theatre group, the Model House itself and, again, seeing 'real things' were popular, and the children enjoyed the fact that the session was not open to the general public (*'That was all quite interesting because... you got to handle things, and if you were just going round the museum, public, then you wouldn't really be able to do that sort of thing'*).

The theatre group's dislikes included not enough handling of items, wanting to be shown round the house with/by the actress, but they were generally happy. The non-theatre group had slightly more complaints – usually that they didn't do enough or wanted to learn more about specific areas.

- *Letters:* No direct evidence as written in character.
- *Pictures:* Little direct evidence, though some of the theatre group pictures contained the children smiling, but that might be just how they draw pictures. The non-theatre group primarily drew objects.
- *Interview at PV2:* Mainly under question (7), both groups had a similar response. The theatre group's responses included: *'You can go around and see all sorts of different*

things, which we wouldn't actually see in the class'; 'If you go to a museum then you can see things in real life, and you can feel them, and like try them on'; 'In the Imperial War Museum, not only do you just walk around you learn things by looking in the submarine, finding out about things'. Non-theatre children said: 'In the museum you can actually discover things and touch things'; 'It's more exciting and you can touch things, it's so boring sitting and listening to someone talk'; 'It's just handling makes it feel so much more like it's there, if you just see it in a glass cabinet, you can't, you know, turn it around, see it more properly, more close-up'.

The theatre group also showed very clear approval from question (3) (*'I didn't actually know that it was going to be as good as that'*). The non-theatre group's approval was slightly more conditional: *'If you're going there to fill in sheets and look at some plaques and doing nothing else, then yes, it gives you a horrible headache'; 'Well I don't really like going to museums with my class or anything, because first thing you've got to fill in sheets, and then you've got everything planned for you'*. One child's favourite part of the visit was walking through the large 1940s House: *'The best part, like it was the big house, and we did go inside it, we just walked straight through, but it was good'*.

2. Recall

- *Interviews at PV1*: Recall from both groups seemed good, although Headington children began with very good knowledge of the subject. The theatre group recalled details of the recipes, the story about being fined, the bath and the toilet paper especially. The non-theatre group recalled what they did, including seeing the large exhibits, etc., but didn't seem to have the same stories to tell.
- *Letters*: There was a good level of knowledge in both groups, perhaps slightly more in the theatre group - although it is again difficult to tell what was the result of the visit, and what was prior knowledge. Details mentioned include the Andersen shelter, blackout, rationing and growing vegetables.
- *Pictures*: In the theatre group, several PV1 pictures show the performer and garden with reasonable accuracy. In the non-theatre group, the level of recall of objects handled (ARP tools, handbag, gas masks) is excellent and the majority of the pictures are in this category. There are no PV2 pictures of the actress from the theatre group, but for the non-theatre group the largest category of PV2 pictures is ARP tools, the majority of which are very well remembered.
- *Interviews at PV2*: Recall after two months had dropped considerably (perhaps because of Christmas and exams in between). The theatre group seems to give less precise examples, and are less able or willing to discuss. The non-theatre group in particular found it difficult to recall what they did (*'We went and looked at different rooms, and it had lots of things in'*) and the material covered (*'A boy, a young boy, I've forgotten his name'*). The non-theatre group also ascribed far fewer changes to the lives of people during WWII.

3. Understanding

- *Interviews at PV1*: Most children gave good answers for problems facing people during WWII (rationing, evacuation, bombing) but probably could have before the visit. The theatre group discussed rationing in relation to the recipes they had heard about. They also concentrated their answers more on what was discussed in the performance: rationing, bombing and evacuation.

- *Letters*: For the theatre group, most letters showed good understanding. They were clear about the difference between city and country, and aware of the problems faced by evacuee children away from home. The non-theatre group showed a superficial understanding (for example, city children seeing animals for the first time) but the tone is much less convincing (*'Have you ridden one of those four legged monsters that they call a horse?'*).
- *Pictures*: No direct evidence.
- *Interviews at PV2*: The theatre group gave more detailed answers about how the War changed the lives of people, and advice that they would give. They also seemed more aware of the ambiguity for evacuee children: *'Well the families got separated, and sometimes they lost their dads or husbands, and it just kind of teared everything apart, losing, and then the children went away as evacuees, and some mothers were left alone, and stuff. But their children, they met the animals when they evacuated, they had fun'*. The non-theatre group had difficulties in focusing their answers on the home front and seemed less aware of the ambiguities for wartime children.

4. Connections made

- *Interviews at PV1*: The theatre group connected the actress very strongly with the house: *'She spoke to us about different things and what she did, and actually where she was staying in her, in the house'; 'I liked hearing about her husband and children and the things of the house'; 'She only had a little room at the back'*. They appeared to enjoy relating the performance content with what they saw in the house. The non-theatre group did not often discuss the three elements of the session in relation to each other, other than occasionally through the Allpress family.
- *Letters*: No direct evidence.
- *Pictures*: These did not show a great deal of evidence, except in some of the captions for PV2 pictures - for example, a drawing of a poster 'Please Bring Jam Jars for the Pub!' with the caption: *'The actress told us that her sons swapped jam jars for bubble gum with the GI's...'*, and from the theatre group a picture of the House and ARP tools with caption *'This picture shows a girl running towards a bomb because it was about to blow up'*. (See fig. 5f)
- *Interviews at PV2*: No direct evidence.

5. Surprise

- *Interviews at PV1*: The children registered surprise about the food eaten during the War, and the amounts of rationed food, as well as the toilet facilities. The questions gave them no opportunity to register surprise at what they were doing during their museum visit.
- *Letters*: These showed no surprise from the children themselves, though a great deal in character, particularly in the rather exaggerated style of the non-theatre group letters.
- *Pictures*: The evidence is mainly in the PV2 pictures, which include from the theatre group a picture of the 1940s House with blackout curtains, captioned: *'I can't believe that if you did not cover your windows (every one) during the war you would be fined 3.00. This is unbelievable because you would be in total darkness and that is a lot of money in those days.'* A picture of the bath with black water-limit line is captioned: *'I was horrified to discover that this was the limit of bath water that they could have. I have*

about over 3x this amount.' [See also fig. 5d] From the non-theatre group there is only one example – a picture of tape on windows with the caption: '*I personally thought it was absolutely bizarre!*'.

- *Interviews at PV2:* The theatre group expressed surprise at the actress's presence ('*I didn't know that we were going to have an actress speaking to us, and when she said, 'come down here', I thought, I didn't know if she was talking to us, and I thought 'who is this person?' but I didn't know*') and at the setting ('*No, I thought, I thought we'd just sit and, in like a room, and there wouldn't be a house*'), and at their enjoyment ('*I didn't actually know that it was going to be as good as that*'). The non-theatre group expressed surprise at the hands-on submarine activities, about the level of detail in the Model House, that they only studied one family, and that they were able to handle things ('*I was quite surprised that they actually let you touch like the fire bomb and like play around with like the helmet.*').

6. Ownership and Empathy

- *Interviews at PV1:* The theatre group perhaps show more ownership in their responses: '*She told us about the boys, when they went into, her sons, when they went into bomb sort of airfields, or something, and a few boys died, and that was a bit... (silence – breath drawn in)*'; '*If you were having a bath, I would be fairly quick, 'cos the siren went off*'; '*I wouldn't probably leave the house that much that much, to be honest*'. The non-theatre group show less ownership ('*I was amazed like how many children there was again, because like you wouldn't see that many children nowadays, and it's like wow, why did, how could she manage that? You know, my Mum always goes like, goes, goes mad even with two children in the house*'). Possibly the non-theatre group's physical separation from the model and looking at the family in past tense impeded the same level of ownership.

There was some indication of empathy with the theatre group: '*...and like when their children would come back from school, they were like wondering if their house, and their parents if they're okay, if they've been hurt*'; '*I'd feel scared and like, I'd feel, a bit sort of, not sort of excited but, I don't know, but I can't really, there's not a word to describe it, scared but also sort of a bit thrilled, sort of like anxious...*'. The stories in the performance, such as coming home to find house knocked down, particularly inspired this. There was less evidence of empathy in the non-theatre group.

- *Letters:* Again the theatre group letters had a much more 'realistic' tone, perhaps indicating that they were treating the exercise more seriously. The non-theatre group letters were very uneven ('*The Parish got blown up! A Doodlebug hit your house. Worse luck!*' or '*Your father has got shot in the back but don't worry, he is fine*'), which while in character and a reasonable pastiche, seemed to indicate a lack of ownership of the material. A larger proportion of the non-theatre group letters are non-specific, with general questions about countryside. Particularly noticeable was the lack of sympathy evident in non-theatre group's letters. The comic treatment of the material also, perhaps, suggests a lack of empathy.
- *Pictures:* The PV1 pictures offer some evidence of ownership among the theatre group, with children themselves depicted in the picture. More evidence is provided at PV2: for example, the drawing of the Andersen Shelter with the caption: '*I chose this picture because I remembered how cramped it was and how small*', or the drawing of a cannon with caption: '*I drew this because my grandpa pushed it in the II world war*', or the Andersen Shelter with commentary: '*She told us what it was like to really BE in the II World War*'. The non-theatre group's PV2 pictures show more evidence, such as a

drawing of a baby gas mask with caption: *'I drew this because I knew when I saw it that my baby sister would scream if she was put in it'*, or a picture of the Andersen Shelter with the caption: *'It scared me because you had to just sit there and hope your house would still be standing when you came out. You would hope that you would be safe in the Andersen Shelter.'* There seemed to be perhaps more care taken over the theatre group's PV2 pictures than over those of the non-theatre group.

- *Interviews at PV2:* There is most evidence in answers to question (6) (What advice would you give?) - *'Well that they should be evacuated because um, if they don't then they'll probably get killed and, even if they don't get killed, you don't want them to get hurt, so you only want what's best for them, so you would just do anything, even if they're going to miss you, or you're going to miss them'*. These refer less to the performance than in PV1. The submarine was the one area that the children really seemed willing to discuss at length. The non-theatre group didn't seem to show the same level of ownership of the material, and often didn't answer the questions in relation to the education session but instead referred to other exhibits seen elsewhere in the museum. There was less empathy evident from both groups compared to PV1.

7. Inspiration/motivation to want to know more

- *Interviews at PV1:* Overall, there is not a great deal of evidence here, but the theatre group wanted more interactive activities and more handling, while the non-theatre group wanted to learn more about the family, the Blitz, and rationing.
- *Letters:* The evidence is not strong, but the level of detail given in some of the letters may reflect a degree of inspiration or motivation, i.e. a willingness to invest time and imaginative effort in writing about a different way of life. This was more evident in the theatre groups than in the non-theatre groups.
- *Pictures:* Likewise, the evidence is not strong, but some of the drawings show considerable care, hard work and engagement - and therefore a degree of motivation - evident in both groups alike.
- *Interviews at PV2:* No direct evidence.

Summary of Headington Junior School responses

Main *similarities* between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

<i>Interview question</i>	<i>Theatre and Non-theatre groups</i>
2	Looked at weapons/planes/etc. Saw house. Saw submarine
3	Many mentions of rationing
5	Many mentioned feeling scared
6	Most suggested evacuate children even though difficult
7	Most thought museums were good because saw real things/did things/etc.

Main differences between the theatre and non-theatre groups at PV2:

Interview question	Theatre group	Non-theatre group
		Used examples from the session to a lesser extent, particularly when answering questions about WWII
2	Mention of house, actress, bath with black line etc.	Equal mention of Model House activities
3	Much more discussion of surprise at what happened to them at museum. Often would enact what happened to them	Seemed much less surprised, often struggled answer to give any answer to question
4	Much more reference to life in 1940's Britain (women's work, black market, listening to radio, less bath water, etc.)	Much more vague discussion of Germany, Hitler, etc.
5	More suggested war fun for children. Wide spread of answers	Wide spread of answers
6	Much more of an attempt to reassure parent	
7	More reference to seeing real things	Less convinced of value of museums in general

Response to interviews at PV2 compared with PV1:

Theatre group	Non-theatre group
More discussion about hearing stories in PV1	Much more general discussion, fewer specific examples given in PV2
Recall less good in PV2	Recall less good in PV2

Complementary activities at PV2 compared with PV1:

Theatre group	Non-theatre group
Far more pictures drawn in PV2 (due to division of class for that session)	Far more pictures drawn in PV2 (due to division of class for that session)
No pictures of performance in PV2, while it was most common picture in PV1	More pictures of ARP tools in PV2
Wide range of pictures in PV2	More air-raid shelter pictures in PV2
More pictures not relating to 1940's House.	More pictures not relating to 1940's House.

4.8.3 Additional observations on responses from both IWM schools

A number of general points emerge which apply to both schools, notably:

- Although, as with the PHM schools, pressures of school timetabling meant that there was less time for interviews at the PV1 stage than would have been ideal, experience of the previous interviews allowed the researcher more opportunity to press for more in-depth answers where appropriate, even though that might mean that other sections of the interview were more rushed. The PV2 interviews had fewer questions and allowed more time for in depth discussion and justification of answers.

- The relative lack of time for drawing pictures at PV1 compared with PV2 needs to be taken into account when assessing recall, attention to detail, etc. This is particularly the case with the Headington Theatre group, as all of those who were present were interviewed, so consequently none of them had the full hour to work on their pictures and letters. With Hermitage Theatre group, only two of the children finished their letters in time to move on to the drawings, making comparison with the non-theatre group extremely difficult. PV1 pictures suggest what seems to have most taken their interest, while PV2 pictures may provide more clues as to the vividness with which they recalled their experience and the interest/engagement with the subject of their picture. [See Figs. 5e, 5f and 5g]
- The question of 'prior knowledge' and other external sources of information is difficult to assess. Although generally the Headington pupils had studied the period in much more detail, one Hermitage theatre group child had a particular interest in military history as well as a grandfather who served in the war as an additional source of information.

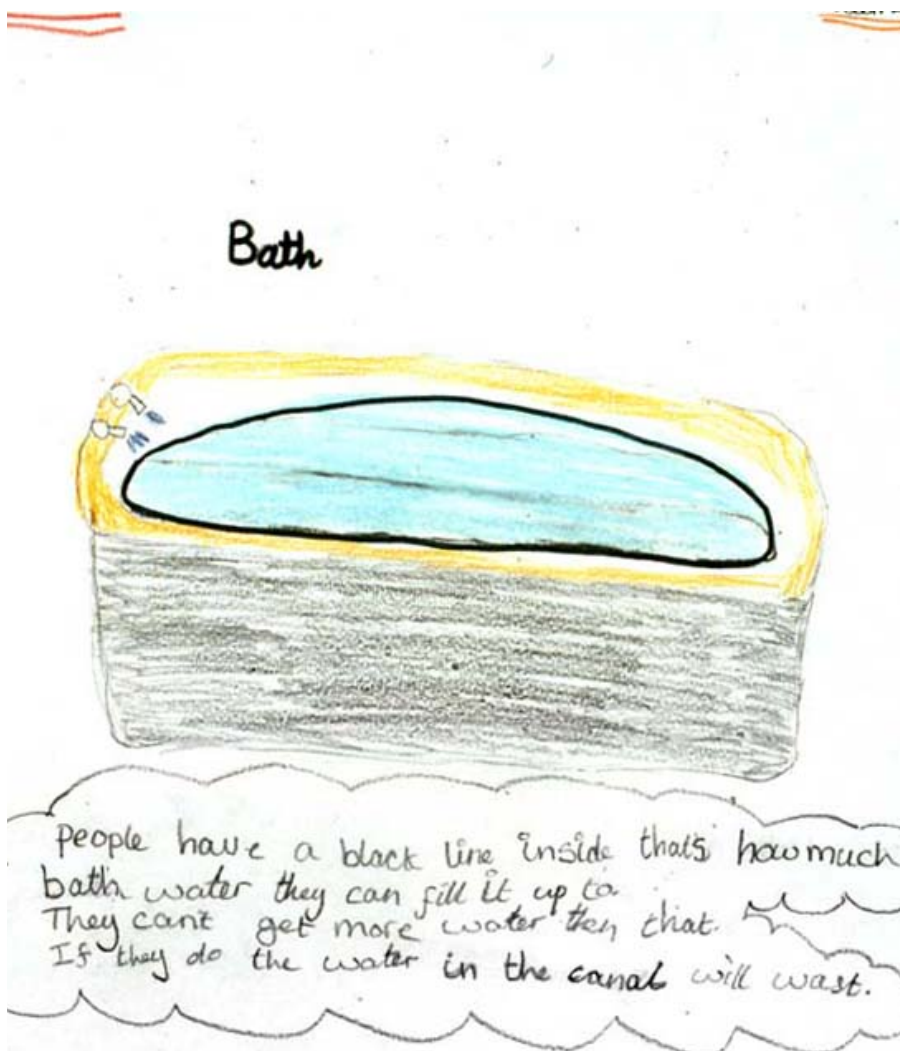


Figure 5e: the black line on the bath. (Hermitage Junior: Theatre group, PV2)

Caption reads: 'People have a black line inside, that's how much bath water they can fill it up to. They can't get more water than that. If they do the water in the canal will waste.'



Figure 5f: Muriel, children and the Andersen Shelter in the back garden
(Headington Junior: Theatre group, PV2) (No caption)



Figure 5g: Model house and ARP objects (spade, bucket and firebomb). (Headington Junior: theatre group, PV-2.) Caption reads: 'I remember the fire bomb the most from the museum because the fire bomb was the most dangerous bomb in the war. This picture shows a girl running towards a bomb because it was about to blow up all the things to stop it with.'

Section 5: Findings

5.1 Comparative observations of the two museum projects and findings

Here we use the project's pupil response categories to identify the main findings that emerged when comparing the experiences of both sets of pupils at both museums.

5.1.1 Experience of the museum

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

- All groups felt that the museum learning experiences were more 'real' and valuable than school classroom-based learning experiences.

Observations

At PHM, responses from pupils from both schools and following both routes indicate high levels of enjoyment of their visits; they particularly enjoyed the 'freedom' to explore and roam around the different museum areas in a relatively un-regimented way. There was a widely shared conviction that enjoyment and learning go together, and an enthusiasm about being able to see 'the real thing', defined variously as being able to handle authentic objects, being able to enter into 'real' environments (the living room, etc) and actually undertaking 'real' activities, and contrasted with 'just being told' by teachers.

At IWM, there were similar expressions of enjoyment of the museum's different experiences and opportunities, and about the whole visit and not only the specific 1940s events encountered. The children appreciated the opportunity to see and touch objects, and the non-theatre group especially appreciated the privilege of being able to handle artefacts not available to the general public.

Theatre groups:

Findings

- Theatre groups felt the context of their theatre experience to be significant
- There was no evidence that the theatre experience detracted from the museum experience overall
- Theatre groups found that a strong narrative-led experience aided understanding

Observations

At both museums, the performed narratives gave a particular focus to the visit and fostered a generally more unified and focused experience. The visit became in its own way a journey through a particular period or set of events which mirrored the journey the character herself embarked upon.

At IWM, the 1940s House predominated: it made a strong impression and the children much enjoyed it. The framework for the event was, then, established first and foremost by the House. The performer – and the rationale for her character – was entirely dependent upon the environment in which she was located. But the performer in turn prompted more focused looking in the House *after* the event (e.g. at the black line round the bath). The 'performance

contract' between children and character, the engagement in the drama, was established through the performer whose narrative then gave a point of reference and a narrative shape to the House and what it represented.

This reaction connects with points arising from the Tower of London pilot, where the Phase One research found that use of the character did not detract from the environment. The issue of relationship between environment and performance needs to be researched further in Phase Three.

At PHM, *No Bed of Roses* was not site-specific – the character of 'Gabrielle' created her own environment, and pupils learned to 'contract in' to the performance and the performance conventions as the drama unfolded. This was evidenced in, for example, scene 2, when the pupils reassembled in the performance area: they now knew how near they could sit to the performer, they huddled in closer and were evidently more comfortable with the style of performance.

Non-theatre groups:

Findings

- Non-theatre groups were offered a sequence of related activities and narratives rather than one experience governed by a single strong narrative
- Non-theatre groups showed more evidence of misunderstanding information communicated during the experience
- Non-theatre groups did not value the aspects of their experience which reflected everyday classroom-based learning
- Non-theatre groups reacted best to elements of their experience which required them to use their imagination through listening to stories, handling, playing and making.

Observations

These pupils generally had a more fragmented experience, especially at PHM; pupils as a result had to be more active in constructing their own narratives around the material. This gave scope for both misunderstanding and 'creativity': they had more opportunity to bring own interpretations to the situations faced. The experience was less fragmented at IWM because of the use of one large education room for the Model House work; there were however still some confusions evident in connecting this work with other elements of the museum experienced .

At IWM, there were some positive comments about being allowed to work in a privileged, non-public space - and some negative comments about the 'classroom-like' activities required of them (some pupils recalled their brief visit to the full-size replica house as 'the best bit' even though not technically part of their programme!). The Model House did not seem to have caught pupils' imaginations to anything like the extent that the full-size House did for the theatre groups. (See also Ownership.)

At PHM, the performative nature of the guided tour and related activities provided a strong framework for the visit, intercut with greatly enjoyed participatory activities. However, the visit lacked the unifying focus provided by 'Gabrielle'. But many pupils did pick up on more than just 'things to do and look at' – for example, the true-life story on audio-tape about coming to Britain and looking for 'diamonds in the street'. (This suggests again the power narrative can have in engaging imaginations and offering insights.)

5.1.2. Recall

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

- Both groups were capable of largely accurate recall 2 months after the visit, demonstrating the power of the museum learning experience overall

Observations

At PHM, the majority of pupils from both groups and both schools demonstrated very clear recall at PV1, albeit in a matter-of-fact style with little reflection on the significance of what they had seen. The most frequently mentioned element, irrespective of the route followed, was the Co-op shop, possibly because this was the first exhibit/re-created environment that both groups experienced, possibly because it offered the most hands-on activity and the greatest opportunity for 'play'. Many of the pictures drawn some 8 weeks after the visit showed a high degree of recall – of details of the groceries in the shop, the radio in the living room, the 1950s football boots, etc. Football was a popular subject for boys from all groups, and at PV2 as much as at PV1, not always related directly to the exhibit, suggesting perhaps that the subject was simply intrinsically interesting for boys and, after 2 months, easier to remember.

At the PV2 interviews, the differences between the groups became more marked, although, again, it was always things done that were recalled better than things seen or heard.

At IWM, both groups and both schools also demonstrated clear recall at PV1, although again often in a rather superficial manner. For both schools recall dropped by PV2, though this was particularly marked with the non-theatre groups. The areas that generally showed best recall were objects that were handled, such as the ARP equipment, and stories that they had been told, such as details of the recipes. At Headington, the pictures drawn at PV2 by both sets of pupils tended to be of subjects *not* relating directly to the 1940s House or the Model House.

Theatre groups:

Findings

- Theatre group recall was better overall than non-theatre-group recall

Observations

In both museums, children experienced a strong, continuous character-narrative – and both groups had good recall of this at both museums. The PHM pupils were (with some prompting of each other) able to reconstruct a lot of Gabrielle's story as well as the activities they undertook. The vividness and attention to detail of pictures drawn by many pupils of Gabrielle (including the colour of her dress, the dance, etc) demonstrate a high degree of engagement and recall.

Both London schools and Medlock showed better recall of the event and the subject-matter than non-theatre groups; at Oswald Road, however, recall was similar for theatre and non-theatre groups, especially of the activity-based experience.

Both London schools (compared to the non-theatre groups) had strong recall of subject-matter arising from narrative *and* from the 1940s House itself.

Non-theatre groups:

Findings

- Non-theatre groups recalled their experience of hands-on activities better than they recalled information delivered through the spoken word
- The non-theatre experience was generally recalled in a fragmented rather than sequential way

Observations

Many of the children's letters showed evidence of more imaginative recall, incorporating into their narrative, for example, their experience of working in the shop or of making boxes. The relative lack of impact of the PHM guided tour (i.e. without the advantage of the character narrative) meant that pupils' recall was less good at the PV2 stage – elements were recalled in isolation, rather as fragments of experience than as an integrated experience. However, children still had clear recall of other elements such as the hands-on activities and interactive displays.

Generally, recall was less good for both museums (especially after two months), except at Oswald Road where recall of activity-based experience and of factual information was similar to that of the theatre group. Compared to the theatre groups, the recall of the IWM Model House experience was less good at both schools.

There was stronger recall of the hands-on activities than of workbooks or talks, for both schools at both museums.

Several drawings of the PHM visit depict stories told by the education officer (and one depicts the education officer himself), suggesting again the impact of the narrator/narrative over and above the object handling for some children.

5.1.3 Connections made and Understanding

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

- There was evidence of misunderstanding and mis-connecting certain elements of the experience in both groups, but this was more evident in the non-theatre groups
- The interactivity of experience had a correlation with understanding in both groups at both museums

Observations

At both Manchester schools, there were no great differences between the groups in terms of their ability or willingness to discuss the visit and the subject matter encountered. This was at least in part because both groups had had the same worksheets and tasks to complete (the guided tour for the non-theatre group was also quite interactive and encouraged discussion).

It seems that, at PHM, where pupils did make connections between different elements of the museum visit, they were confused or had misinterpreted. The confusion was rather more evident in the Medlock non-theatre group, partly because the guided tour had to cover a wider range of material than was the case with the theatre group and within a collection that did not readily offer a coherent pathway in respect of 1950s immigration. Some connections were made, for both groups, through the letters written 'back home': many children

referenced the entire museum experience as material for narrating stories of the immigrants' lives in Britain.

At IWM there was a greater initial difference between the two schools in prior knowledge, so the level of detail absorbed in both the sessions at the museum also varied. With the Hermitage group, the actress felt that she ran the risk of '*blinding them with too many facts*' if she went in to as much detail as with the Headington group. Consequently there was a difference in the level of understanding demonstrated by the two schools, particularly at PV1. With regard to making connections with the rest of the museum, Headington school visited for a whole day and saw many other exhibits, mainly though not exclusively focused on WWII, while the Hermitage groups saw very little of the rest of the museum, the non-theatre group in particular. As both sessions at the IWM were more chronologically limited, there was less opportunity for confusion, but there was some confusion in terms of type of military equipment and whether or not the Germans were in Britain, particularly in the Hermitage non-theatre group. The differences between the theatre and non-theatre groups generally became more noticeable at PV2, especially at Hermitage.

Theatre groups:

Findings

- Theatre groups generally were more willing to discuss and give reasons for their responses to post-visit questions
- Theatre groups had more scope for *personal* interpretation of the overall experience, enhancing a sense of ownership, but sometimes leading to inaccuracy and lack of understanding of the narratives of the actual collections.

Observations

All groups had, via the character narrative, a very individual insight into the general narrative and the issues it raised. They were readier to discuss these at PV1 and PV2 than the non-theatre groups; but there was some evidence that that they were less able to draw general conclusions from that single narrative.

There was more opportunity for confusion about how the different elements of the visit connected and about historical accuracy, noted especially at Oswald Road and Hermitage schools (e.g. for some Gabrielle's story seemed unconnected to the rest of the visit; others had difficulty relating immigration and everyday life in the 1950s; while at IWM, the House and other elements of the visit, Trench warfare etc, were likewise unrelated).

The character was the benchmark for all the children's references to the period and issues raised. For the PHM groups, the character of Gabrielle and the narrative she told were often referred to. They used her as the lens through which they learned about life as a factory worker, dealing with racism, etc. She provided a link between the different aspects of life encountered. However, there were some differences between the two Manchester schools: at Medlock, for example, just as many pupils (at PV-2) advised 'don't go to England' as advised 'go'.

At Headington, the references were mostly related to life in the 1940s House rather than specifically to the character. The importance of the whole environment in the IWM experience was evident in the pupils' responses at both schools.

The groups at both London schools were more willing than their non-theatre counterparts to discuss and give reasons for their answers – e.g. '*They would have been scared because...*'. Their answers were not always based on the narrative either, but on other relevant material from their visit or from prior knowledge.

At IWM, the theatre groups connected what they learnt from the character directly to the house itself and the lifestyle it represented since the narrative included this explicitly, whereas the non-theatre group rarely discussed the three elements of the session in relation to each other, except occasionally in terms of the Allpress family. However, the questions asked at interview did not explicitly invite such connections so definite conclusions should not be drawn in this respect.

Non-theatre groups:

Findings

- The more linear the narrative/experience, the less scope for confusion within the non-theatre groups
- The non-theatre groups were less able to articulate reasons for their post-visit answers

Observations

At PHM, pupils had a more fragmented experience than their theatre counterparts; both schools were as a result more active in constructing their own narratives around the material, although this sometimes resulted in confused ideas about chronology or the causes of immigration. At Medlock, for example, the more explicit references to slavery during their guided tour led several children wholly to misconstrue the relationship between slavery and 1950s immigration, chronologically and factually. Many did however pick up on issues 'close to home' such as the fairness with which immigrants were or were not treated.

The non-theatre experience at IWM was less fragmented, given the concentrated atmosphere and consistent focus afforded by the work being undertaken exclusively in the Education Room. There was thus less scope for, and less evidence of, confusion than at PHM.

The IWM groups were less able or less willing to offer reasons for why life during the war was as it was – they were mostly satisfied with factual answers. The factors that determined this were likely to have been several, and different for each school. At Hermitage, the lack of time available for preparation in advance of the visit meant that most pupils were at the limits of their knowledge and were unwilling to stray into uncharted territory; while at Headington, the opposite was true: by the time pupils were being interviewed for the second time, they had already covered the material at such length that many probably felt a need to 'move on' rather than dwell further on 'old' material. Even so, the levels of interest shown by the theatre groups was noticeably higher in both schools.

5.1.4 Surprise

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

- Both groups found elements of their museum learning experience surprising, but were less surprised by the museum itself
- The non-theatre groups were more likely to mention 'then and now' comparisons as surprising

Observations

We looked for two kinds of 'surprise' here: surprise at what the children encountered at the museum (meeting an actor, being able to touch objects, etc) and surprise about what they

discovered about the period (lifestyle, etc). We also hoped to detect any possible changes in their pre-conceptions about the period; however, this proved rarely to be forthcoming – largely because, at both museums, many if not all of the pupils had little prior knowledge of the periods, so a change in perception was for most a virtual impossibility. There was little surprise registered about the museum itself, again often because many appeared to have no benchmark against which they could measure their surprise (or lack of it). Where a response was forthcoming, it tended to be expressed in terms of the pleasure they had in being allowed a degree of freedom in moving around the museum and in being allowed to handle artefacts.

At PHM, some surprise was registered by boys at the differences in the style of football boots; others were surprised to discover day-to-day differences in social living, especially in about the way the corner shop was run. Letters registered considerable surprise at the conditions the immigrants encountered in the 1950s.

At IWM, while the theatre groups registered more surprise at aspects of the wartime lifestyle, both groups expressed surprise at the blackout restrictions.

Theatre groups:

Findings

- Theatre groups found the presence of the actor unexpected and surprising in a positive sense on the day
- Post-visit, theatre groups seemed to have assimilated their surprise into an appreciation of the experience overall

Observations

At PHM, a number of Medlock pupils (but only a few of the Oswald Road pupils) were surprised by the presence of the actor; she was mentioned again at PV2 but with less emphasis – presumably because this was now, with hindsight, seen as an integral part of the visit.

At IWM, the black line drawn around the bath aroused much surprise, evidenced at Headington especially in the pictures and captions drawn; at Hermitage, surprise showed mainly in the PV1 interviews, in rather general terms. More surprise about meeting the character and at going through the house was registered at PV2 than at PV1 (but there was more time at PV2 to press for fuller answers).

Non-theatre groups:

Findings

- Non-theatre groups expressed surprise at being able to handle museum objects and clearly enjoyed learning through active making, object-handling and role-play

Observations

At PV2, surprise was expressed at both schools about being able to handle real objects, documents etc, especially the actual possessions of a real family.

The non-theatre group at Medlock expressed more surprise at the differences between then and now than did the theatre group, possibly because their attention had been drawn more explicitly to these differences as part of the guided tour.

5.1.5 Ownership and Empathy

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

Some empathy and ownership was evident in all groups, but there was more shown in the theatre groups' responses

Observations

At PHM, as \already noted, the responses from the two schools differed in a number of respects. The two groups at Oswald Road showed considerable similarity in the degree of ownership expressed, while at Medlock the two groups differed markedly. The Oswald Road groups were both able to empathise with the issues facing immigrants to Britain (the theatre group referencing primarily the experiences faced by Gabrielle and the non-theatre group taking a more 'pick and mix' approach). However, ambivalence about the prospects of migration was only occasionally expressed by the children, and this was no more evident in one group than the other.

At IWM, both groups from Hermitage evidenced some degree of ownership/personal interpretation in answer to the PV1 question 'why are museums important?' For example, children felt it was important to know what to do in case we had another war. At Headington, the difference between the groups was more marked, with considerably more empathy evident in the theatre group - possibly because the non-theatre group felt more distanced from events by the fact of the three-dimensional model and by the task set them of investigating a family from the past. Although the theatre group's session was much shorter, they were moving from space to space and in active dialogue (at both 'real' and imaginative levels) with the character-performer. It is likely that, in Peter Slade's terms⁹, 'personal play' (involving the whole person: body and mind) generates more active engagement at an emotional as well as physical level than does the 'projected play' involved in working with objects and 'reality-in-miniature'.

Both groups at Hermitage showed little ownership in their letters (imagined experiences had little to do with 'real life' WW2 situations); while at Headington, the differences between the groups were again more marked.

Theatre groups:

Findings

- Theatre group pupils' imaginations were triggered through the theatre experience, leading to some serious, personalised responses

Observations

Hermitage pupils were much readier (at PV2) to relate the experience of living through wartime to their own lives, imagining what it would be like to have bombs going off around you, etc, and they expressed their prospective nervousness and fear. In answer to the question 'how might they have felt?' (at PV2), there was a strong emotional content directly related to the WWII bombing and its effects on everyday life.

Headington pupils evidenced a degree of empathy via some of the pictures drawn at PV2 (especially in relation to the cramped Andersen Shelter) and in answer to 'what advice would

⁹ See Peter Slade *Child Drama*, London: University of London Press, 1954; see also Gavin Bolton, *Acting in the Classroom: a critical analysis*, Staffordshire: Trentham Books, 1998.

you give?' (PV2). The theatre group letters reflected a strong degree of reality and seriousness of tone.

The PHM letters showed some very strong responses, mostly indicating a high degree of sympathy with immigrants to the UK, and the story of Gabrielle provided an explicit narrative on which they could draw.

Non-theatre groups:

Findings

- There was less evidence of personal engagement among pupils in the non-theatre groups

Observations

In context of PHM collections, it was not easy to focus on the immigration theme without the 'Gabrielle' resource. So the guided tour, workbooks, etc, could never offer the same intense experience or personal insight that were on offer to the theatre group - hence the relative lack of impact. Pupils didn't care so much about the subject-matter and their recall was less good. However, they did pick up on issues 'close to home' such as the fairness or otherwise of the way immigrants were treated. Their letters again evinced some strong responses, indicating a high degree of sympathy with immigrants to the UK, taking however a more 'pick 'n' mix' approach in drawing on their museum experience to construct their personal narratives.

At IWM, while, again, children from Headington showed some empathy in their PV2 pictures of the Andersen Shelter etc, there was significantly less ownership of the material in PV2 interviews compared with the theatre group. Headington pupils often answered questions in relation to other things seen in the museum (such as the submarine) which were unrelated to the 'model house' education work. The Hermitage PV2 interviews showed little empathy: answers were at a generalised level with no reasons given as to why people might be scared, etc. The non-theatre group's letters did not demonstrate the same sense of reality as seen in the theatre group's: there was a good deal of pastiche or tongue-in-cheek reference, for example to wartime bombings.

5.1.6 Inspiration

Theatre and non-theatre groups:

Findings

- All groups showed little *direct* evidence of inspiration or motivation to find out more
- There was more evidence of inspiration in the post-visit letters, especially those following the PHM visits

Observations

The IWM groups from both schools showed little evidence of inspiration or motivation to find out more, though the Hermitage non-theatre group did want to know more about the Model House and how the family used to live.

At PHM, there was some desire expressed to find out more about what daily life was 'really' like. This suggests that the museum visit had whetted their appetite to know more; it may also suggest that some were only too conscious that what they had seen was 'un-real', re-

constructed and a kind of a fiction: that it could be no more than a hint of what life might have been like.

Note. It may be that this category needed to be tested using a differently phrased question, or that most pupils were at the limits of their knowledge and felt that they had taken in all they really needed or wanted to know - or that the experiences offered were just not designed to inspire motivation to extend children's boundaries of knowledge. The questions posed at PV2 did not explicitly test this aspect any further.

Inspiration is more in evidence in the letters written, especially at PHM, where the visit clearly inspired many children to reflect their new knowledge in creative narration.

Under this category there was little marked difference between the theatre and non-theatre groups at either museum.

Section 6: Assessment of the research

In this section, we assess the success of the research in relation to both the original and the revised aims and objectives. We consider the implications for an extension of the research, reflect upon some of the key issues arising from it, and estimate its wider significance.

6.1 Meeting the original aims of the research, and looking forward

6.1.1 Aims 1 and 2: Testing the effectiveness of theatre techniques in museums and comparing them with other techniques

1. To test a number of the claims made for the educational effectiveness of theatre techniques in museum contexts, and, particularly, the claim that museum theatre can uniquely enhance children's understanding and recall of significant features of the social history associated with an historic site or museum collection.

2. To investigate, in comparison with other ways of conveying historical information, the strengths and weaknesses of such theatrical methods in museum contexts.

As described in Section 4, the research examined directly the educational effectiveness of theatre techniques in the context of two specific museums. The findings suggest that there are indeed characteristics of learning that can be directly attributed to the theatre experienced by the pupils. We do not, however, wish to claim that the learning so generated has been proven to be 'unique' – the sample of children tested and of museum experiences investigated was too small to be able to extrapolate such a broad generalisation. Nor do we wish to place different styles of learning in museums in any hierarchical order. Nonetheless, there were a number of recurring characteristics evidenced in children's responses to two distinctly different kinds of museum visit, and from at least three of the four very different schools, which suggest that the performances did promote a remarkable degree of detailed recall, of empathy with characters from the past, and of 'focused looking' at the collections. (See also 'Wider significance' below.)

6.1.2 Aim 3: the viability of longer-term research

3. Through a six-month pilot study, to test the viability and potential of more sustained, longer-term research into the effectiveness of museum theatre, and applied to a more diverse range of theatrical methods, audiences and contexts.

The project was inevitably a limited one in its timescale and range of museum and theatre experiences investigated. It has nonetheless allowed the researchers to design and test a methodology appropriate to the practices and audiences being researched. With further modification we believe it can be applied to a broader range of museum theatre activity.

Given the richness and significance of the data emerging from this project, we are convinced of the importance and potential of extended research in this field. We have so far only scratched the surface of our subject, and believe we have demonstrated the need for, and feasibility of, a larger research programme to examine museum-based and site-based theatre. Such a programme would focus on both performance and interactive approaches, tested on a larger number and wider range of clients - not only with schools but with independent 'drop-in' visitors in a lifelong learning context - and over a longer time-scale.

For 'captive' audiences such as schoolchildren on an organised visit, our Phase Two scheme would require relatively little modification. However, in order to assess the impact of theatre and theatre techniques (including 'first person interpretation') upon a variety of audiences, including independent visitors, and at heritage sites as well as museums, rather more sophisticated methods of enquiry would be needed. These should build upon and augment the methodology developed for the present research. We believe that recall and reflection upon an experience after a substantial interval of time is an essential component of such research, for the independent visitor as much as for the organised school party. It would be necessary again to try to capture the responses of visitors not only on site but several months later too (there are ample research models to draw on from other educational research and audience research programmes). The investigation at large heritage sites of the relationship between interpretative techniques, learning experiences and environment will also benefit from documentation using additional methods such as video-recording and stills photography.

We envisage a two- or three-year programme of research. This would also aim to:

- develop more sophisticated forms of evaluation
- foster mutually beneficial links with MA programmes in Theatre, Art Gallery and Museum, and Heritage Studies
- advance the practice of museum theatre through the generation of new forms of theatre-based interpretation in collaboration with museum and theatre professionals. The current research focused on dominant museum theatre models; it will be important at the next stage to ensure the research engages with, and helps to initiate, other, innovative practice.

6.2 Meeting the research objectives

1. To research two representative types of museum theatre work which use (respectively) performance-based and interactive approaches, and operate in site-based and conventional museum settings.

As described in Section 3.2, the given constraints of timescale and logistics led to a re-definition of the scope of the enquiry, focusing only on museum settings and excluding heritage sites. The re-definition also had some positive repercussions for the research process: it enabled us to make closer and more productive comparisons between the experiences offered at the two museums. Both museums offered broadly similar theatre experiences, in that both were structured around single character presentations, but there were also some substantial differences between them – such as the replicated site-specific setting for the performance at the IWM, in contrast to the 'found' location of the PHM performance; one was from the start wholly interactive while the other was primarily performance-oriented. Those differences were substantial enough to enable us to check our common criteria for identifying the learning characteristics against two distinct styles of theatre presentation.

2. To utilise and test the validity of appropriate qualitative research methods when applied to museum theatre

As described in Section 3, we began with a clear overall research design, grounded in naturalistic enquiry and using such qualitative research procedures as the case study and semi-structured small group interviews, with an element of longitudinal research (the follow-up interviews two months after the event) built in. The design was modified in consultation with museum staff and participating teachers (as we had planned) and was further modified as the research progressed, particularly following our initial trawl of the first set of interviews.

3. *To disseminate the findings of the research via articles in refereed journals, newsletters of the relevant professional associations, the World Wide Web, and relevant international conferences.*

This process is already well underway, and will continue beyond the date of this report (see Section 7 below). We have taken care to ensure that dissemination takes place within and across the relevant academic disciplines (museum and theatre studies) and the professional groupings (museum educators and policy makers and museum theatre practitioners).

6.3 Issues and problems arising, especially in research methodology

6.3.1 Categories of pupil response

The seven categories by which we charted and categorised children's responses (see Section 3.2.4) were refined during several different stages of the research, and proved reasonably robust and fit for purpose. However, there were several areas of overlap between categories (eg 'connection-making' and 'understanding'; and 'ownership' and 'empathy' - which we eventually decided should be merged). The categories enabled us to capture and reflect the differences of emphasis and inflection within the variety of responses we documented, but the overlap and lack of neat dividing-lines between categories were perhaps inevitable given the difficulty of categorising any human response that includes affective as well as cognitive responses - and given the diverse backgrounds of the respondents.

The 'Inspiration/Motivation' and 'Surprise' categories proved less productive than we had hoped. Further research will need to factor in a more sensitive means of testing how far the experience had genuinely stimulated curiosity and whether it had led to further enquiry of any kind. It may be that most pupils were at the limits of their knowledge and felt that they had taken in all they really needed or wanted to know, or that the experiences offered were just not designed to inspire motivation to extend the boundaries of their knowledge. If surprise is also taken to cover evidence of changed attitudes, then again the fact that pupils may have been at the limits of their knowledge of the subject, or may have had no prior expectations against which to register surprise, may explain the lack of substantial data under these headings. Our questions at PV2 did not explicitly test this aspect any further – a point that will be taken on board in any Phase Three extension of this research.

6.3.2 Pictures

The relative lack of time for drawing pictures, especially at PV1, had to be taken into account when assessing recall and attention to detail. The limited evidence did suggest the possibility of a correlation between quality of experience at the museum and quality of artwork produced; but a direct cause and effect link was not proven. Further research might well test this further through providing more time for students to engage in creative responses to the visit and perhaps with a more controlled range of art materials available.

6.3.3 Interviews

Due to the pressures of the school timetable, there was a good deal less time for interviews at the PV1 stage than we would have liked. This was however compensated for by the different format of the PV2 interviews which were more productive, given the increased opportunities for probing and developing points made, and the greater time-lapse for

information to 'settle' or fade from pupils' minds. More time for all sets of interviews will need to be factored in for the planned Phase Three of the research, to be undertaken over a longer timescale.

6.3.4 Prior knowledge

The factor of 'prior knowledge' possessed by the pupils, derived from family, friends, television, the internet and other external sources of information, is always extremely difficult to assess, even in long term ethnographic research. It does however have to be acknowledged as a potentially significant factor, and may indeed have influenced some of the pupils' responses, especially regarding attitudes to immigration (PHM), war (IWM) and 'home' (PHM and IWM). Conversations which take place at children's homes or are in other ways outside the reach of the investigation, are an inevitable part of the process by which learning, informal as well as formal, takes place, and a factor that naturalistic enquiry of this kind cannot – and should not – try to eradicate. Indeed, many of those conversations may well have been triggered by the events under scrutiny.

6.3.5 Team interpretation

It must be stressed that our findings from the research data were inevitably the product, at least in part, of the subjective interpretations of the team. The indirect evidence in particular, such as the pictures and creative writing undertaken, cannot by its very nature lead to clear-cut, scientifically deducible conclusions. The team therefore took every care to ensure that all such data were scrutinised and debated by all members of the team and the interpretations offered represent the team's views, rather than those of any one individual.

6.4 Wider significance: broad conclusions and implications

The findings of the research can be regarded as significant in a number of contexts:-

6.4.1 Museum theatre research

Researching how two groups of children learn in museums has enabled us to test both the claims of the advocates of museum theatre (ie that it is a *uniquely* powerful educational medium) and also the objections of its detractors (ie. that it presents a partial view of history, and diverts attention from the authentic object/site). The research indicates that neither (admittedly extreme) view represents an accurate characterisation of the medium: it *can* be a powerful interpretive tool, but is not unique in this; it *can* present a partial view of history (just as all interpretation will do) - but can also encourage closer attention to the exhibits. For example, the findings clearly demonstrate that active learning (through role play, object handling and so on) stimulates enjoyment, recall, understanding and empathy, as does the experience of museum theatre. Whereas a performance such as *No Bed of Roses* at the Pump House Museum provides a powerful connecting narrative for its audience, the non-theatre group had to construct the same meanings for themselves, with the effect that many children were often more confused while others (if a smaller number) also showed high levels of 'ownership' of their experiences.

By comparing two kinds of museum theatre – both of them monologues but with greater audience participation at the IWM, where the performance was also framed by life size and very realistic set – the research has also yielded insights into the different effects of diverse performance strategies. For example, far from distracting the children's attention away from the exhibit (the 1940s House), the actress at IWM prompted them to re-focus their looking at what they had already seen, but not, perhaps, properly observed. By contrast, the actress at

PHM created - and held - a stage within a gallery of mixed displays by virtue of the intensity of her performance. Her monologue was intercut with opportunities to look at the exhibits, which functioned almost as a physical release (and light relief) from the performance (albeit at the expense of providing a rather fragmented experience of the museum itself).

6.4.2 Museum education and Drama education

Our research makes a significant contribution to the expanding field of museum education research, theory and practice. A controlled comparison of two groups of pupils' experience of two contrasting educational and interpretative methodologies and techniques is still relatively rare in the published literature on museum education and evaluation. This model provides as many insights into the effects of techniques such as object handling, worksheets, guided tour and making activities as it does into the effects of museum theatre. For example, the findings indicate that both performance *and* object handling/role play have the potential to stimulate active learning among children, as demonstrated by the (generally) high levels of engagement and understanding among both the theatre and the non-theatre groups. The research has also yielded fresh insights into the ways in which different kinds of museum spaces (such as immersive environments like the 1940s House, classrooms, or gallery reconstructions) also shape learning and are, in turn, are 'read' by children.

Using our seven categories of pupil response, we have been able to identify evidence of affective, as well as cognitive, experience and learning. This is entirely appropriate for understanding learning in an informal environment such as a museum (or indeed, a theatre), and may provide a model for future research in the fields of museum and drama education and audience research. Our research techniques (children's interviews, creative writing, drawing, plus observations and interviews with teachers) were also designed to accommodate diverse learning styles. Generally, they were successful in yielding *evidence* (where it existed) of the learning factors that we had identified.

6.4.3 Interdisciplinarity

The complementary perspectives of our interdisciplinary research team (comprising drama academics, a museologist and a specialist consultant in museum theatre) have stimulated the development of new conceptual approaches to the understanding of museum education.

For example, the notion of forming a contract (between performer and audience) is familiar in drama theory, but has not previously been applied to the conditions of possibility in which museum learning takes place (for example, the possibility of a contract existing between viewer and object). Similarly, the effect of the frame – or rather, of multiple, overlapping frames which are physical, metaphorical, social, institutional and cultural – has emerged from this research as a way of describing the significance of diverse factors on an individual's experience and learning, including those many factors which lie beyond the agency of the actor, teacher or education officer.

As well as its significance to academic research, the project has produced data and insights which are highly relevant to museum policy and practice, including financial and educational cost-benefit analyses at institutional, regional and national levels.

The support and assistance of professional organisations, notably the participating museums and primary schools but also GEM and IMTAL-Europe, has likewise demonstrated the value of collaborative approaches to research and the willingness of professionals in the field to contribute to the design and implementation of such research while at the same time recognising the necessary dividing lines between research and advocacy.

Section 7: Dissemination

7.1 Dissemination of research findings to date

- At an early stage of the research, an announcement was made in the IMTAL-Europe Newsletter (Summer 2001); and an initial outline of the research, its rationale and method of approach was given by the research team at the IMTAL International Festival and Conference of Museum Theatre, London, September 2001.
- An interim account of how the research was progressing was given at an internal seminar in the University of Manchester School of Art History and Archaeology (for the MA programme in Art Gallery and Museum Studies) – presented by Rees Leahy and Johnson, March 2002.
- Once the fieldwork had come to an end and as the findings were beginning to emerge, a paper on the research (related to current research and practice debates) was given by Jackson at the international conference held at Exeter University (*Research and Practice*), April 2002.
- In July 2002, a paper reflecting the findings in the context of contemporary theatre practice was given by Jackson, Rees Leahy and Johnson at the IFTR (International Federation for Theatre Research) World Congress, University of Amsterdam (*Theatre and Cultural Memory*).
- In July 2002, Jackson presented a paper on the research in the context of theatre as a medium of learning at the conference of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, Minnesota (presented at a meeting of the Museum Theatre Network).
- In September 2002, Walker presented a report on the research at the annual conference of GEM, Edinburgh.
- In September 2002, the team presented a more detailed analysis of the findings at the annual conference of the Museums Association, Manchester.

7.2 For the future

Web Site: a version of the full report will be placed on the website of the Centre for Applied Theatre Research (CATR), University of Manchester, with links to the University's Centre for Museology and IMTAL-Europe web sites.

Articles: The following publications are planned (in addition to the full report), subject to confirmation:

- article by Helen Rees Leahy in an academic museum education journal
- article(s) by Anthony Jackson and Paul Johnson in specialist theatre or educational theatre journals (eg: RIDE, NTQ, TRI, Australian on-line *Applied Theatre Researcher*). A short article by Jackson, 'Between evaluation and research: making the case for theatre as an educational tool', will appear in *Stage of the Art* (American Alliance for Theatre & Education, Fall 2002)
- article by Verity Walker (e.g. in JEM and/or the IMTAL Newsletter).