

Regent's Canal Heritage Learning Pack

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SCHOOL CANAL TRIPS

A group trip to the canal by walking or by boat can provide a unique learning experience as well as fitness benefits. The material in the Learning Pack can be used as follows:

CURRICULUM NOTES will help teachers to design follow up lessons - anything from general class discussions on the observations and experience of the trip to lessons designed for National Curriculum requirements. These notes help teachers with pre-trip classroom discussion. It is often found that the class get a lot more out of the trip if they have also been enthused beforehand.

'REGENT'S CANAL THROUGH THE AGES' gives the history of the Canal with facts and images using a quiz format to convey information and spark interest. It can be used for background information as well as a source of photos.

THE 'ISPY' BOOKLET is designed to accompany groups on the canal trip. It is also for follow up work in the classroom, where each child could have their own copy. For trips arranged by boat with Laburnum, Islington or the Pirates Castle Boat Clubs, there will be up to 12 people including the staff on each boat. The trips are designed for participation, with children working the locks and having turns steering the boat. Our experience is that they are better off without individual booklets to fill in - but are free to concentrate on these activities and for observations.

The teacher/supervising adults can take one booklet per boat, using it to direct children's attention to points of interest and provide information on the things to look out for. They can get the whole group to look out for the particular items in the booklet, and to report when they are spotted, and the teacher (or chosen child) could tick off the 'I-Spy' item. This helps the adults to anticipate what there is to see, and to encourages discussion and Q&A along the way.

With adult supervision, children can look at the map and items in the booklet. It is designed to be helpful for the adults to maintain the children's interest throughout the trip, though of course spontaneous reactions to things witnessed should always take priority!

It may well be that the booklet is most helpful on the return journey - to look more closely along the canal, and to focus attention after the initial excitement of the outward voyage. Maybe the outward journey could look for general items (boats, canal features, birds), and the return for specific features (bridges, buildings)

Back in the classroom, follow up work and discussion could be initiated by each child having their own copy. In class, the journey can be reviewed with them ticking the things they have seen. Points of interest and significance can be discussed. Notes can be added to the booklets and there could be further drawing and colouring in.

It would be good where possible for the teacher and the supervising adults to be familiar with the booklet before the trip, to think through how best the booklet can be used with each group.

The teacher might decide that the children see their own copies in the classroom before the trip, to anticipate the route and the things to look out for - though it is still recommended that they do not each take their own booklet with them actually on the boat.