

Commonwealth in town ... an opportunity for learning?

Seeking expressions of interest

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Birmingham is hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022.
There is an opportunity to use the interest this will generate to stimulate learning about the Commonwealth.

Such learning will draw on a wide range of curriculum and other activities, but at the heart of it is the need for us, as teachers, to be comfortable about engaging with ideas and issues relating to the Commonwealth's complex and contested history.

In preparation, over the next 6 months, we need opportunities to enable us to reflect on our own awareness of the Commonwealth starting with a discussion at the Tide~ AGM on 17th June.

We are initially asking interested teachers and leaders in schools to come together informally to discuss perspectives, ideas, and the resources and approaches that either exist or we could create together. It will be useful to build an informal and open network of professionals so we can share our thinking and ideas as we progress and thus create a network of support for planning and implementation.

We know that there is renewed focus upon the curriculum and, therefore, we would expect this to be an opportunity, especially for schools in the West Midlands, to think about aspects of KS2 and KS3 curriculum planning for 2022.

Clearly there are likely to be many school based projects and we will work to share their good practice with the wider network and beyond. For instance, Hodge Hill College is already mapping learning opportunities across non-core subjects, Selly Park Girls School is already thinking about transition projects for 2022 in this context.

Coordination Group:

- ❑ Gilroy Brown
- ❑ Rita Chowdhury
- ❑ Nikki Craig
- ❑ Jeff Serf
- ❑ Scott Sinclair

An enquiry framework

There are 54 countries in the Commonwealth of which 32 are described as small states.

It has been suggested that it would be useful to develop a basic 'enquiry framework' for use by students to apply to any member country.

Africa

Botswana
Cameroon
Eswatini
Gambia, The
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nigeria
Rwanda
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Tanzania, United Republic
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia

Asia

Bangladesh
Brunei Darussalam
India
Malaysia
Maldives
Pakistan
Singapore
Sri Lanka

Caribbean and Americas

Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas, The
Barbados
Belize
Canada
Dominica
Grenada
Guyana
Jamaica
Saint Lucia
St Kitts and Nevis
St Vincent & The Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago

Europe

Cyprus
Malta
United Kingdom

Pacific

Australia
Fiji
Kiribati
Nauru
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu



Connections?

A good starting point may be the connections that you or your school community have to particular countries.

- ◇ What resources exist that are suitable for use in school to enable learning about that place and its history?
- ◇ What sources exist that could help develop a teaching resource?
- ◇ Would you be interested in joining a teacher group to help develop such a resource?



At this stage we are seeking:

1. consultation with teachers and school leaders* as outlined.

We will be holding a virtual meeting in June to start the process.

Initial Zoom consultation: Tuesday 6th July at 6.00. Please sign up*

David Brown has agreed to lead a process of consultation.

[He is Chair of Directors Hamstead Hall Trust & CEO at EPA Trust
Oxfordshire and has been a member of Tide~ since he was a young teacher]

2. proposals* for ET articles about the issues, curriculum opportunities, specific places in the Commonwealth ... and featuring recommended resources.

There will be an **Elephant Times Commonwealth Publication** in January 2022.

3. a group* of teachers and education practitioners to explore, for the network, what a 'Commonwealth Awareness Framework' could look like. Is such a concept is a useful planning tool?

As part of this it may also be productive to consider:

- ☐ the dynamic of personal stories, art and music;
- ☐ the contribution of different curriculum areas;
- ☐ the stimulus of resources in the community such as buildings, names, museum collections and individuals;
- ☐ the needs of learners at different key stages.

* We are seeking expressions of interest

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Partnership and Co-operation

This Tide~ initiative seeks to contribute to, and cross reference with, a range projects that will respond to the Games. In particular we have been consulting with Birmingham Education Partnership [BEP].

We are also aware of plans being developed by The British Council and BEP, as well as by Birmingham City University. We look forward to learning more about them and how we can focus our work to maximise co-operation.

The Games Logo - like new pair of glasses at the centre of a complex web



The key challenge at this stage is thinking about the significance of the Commonwealth's "complex and contested" history.

Sathnam Sanghera's recently published book '**Empireland**' offers an overview that feels like the stimulus we need to start the process.

His ideas about education are narrow but in just over 200 pages he captures something of 500 years of history and opens up key debates about the implications for us today.

The book gives us a lot to think about but he offers a disposition to find positive ways forward ... rather than add to division.

Thinking about such challenges builds on many Elephant Times articles, in particular **ET[3]** ... as Daniel Stone put it:

"We were never asked to reflect on how and why, people were able to dehumanise other people for centuries, and which parts of that psyche are still alive in us today"

