



## Local Heroes

## The Covenanters

### Evaluation

#### General approach

S3 pupils in five East Ayrshire schools explored the topic of *The Covenanters* paying particular attention to local stories. A variety of practical Drama and Media workshop activities were used to inspire and develop creative writing skills. Pupils were subsequently invited to submit ideas for a movie treatment in storyboard and/or script format. These were then developed into a working script for use by professional actors to be filmed on location.

### The Workshops

#### Session One

This session introduced pupils to the historical background and social significance of the covenanters. The majority of pupils knew little if anything about the subject, so, as much as possible, this aspect was explored using AV presentations and storyboarding exercises.

#### Session Two

This session explored script-writing techniques for stage and screen. An AV presentation introduced an example of a local covenanting event - The Battle of Drumclog. Pupils were then given a scripted interpretation of the same episode to illustrate the importance of settings, characters and action. They subsequently worked in teams to produce storyboards for the different scenes.

#### Session Three

This session served as a preparation for pupils to submit their own scripted ideas working from prescribed storyboards relating to other covenanting episodes. Attention was paid to the practicalities of movie production and the necessary considerations for the screen-writer. Atmosphere and emotional quality were explored through visual and audio information such as music as well as dialogue.

### The Script Submissions

Owing to the usual problem of timetable pressures in secondary schools, it was emphasised at the outset that pupils were under no obligation to submit their ideas for a movie script. However, it was clear that both staff and pupils saw the value of the exercise and I was delighted that four out of the five schools took up the invitation. Many were even prepared to do this in their own time apparently.

I was genuinely impressed with the quality of the work produced, especially when you consider that script writing was such a new experience for them. I am convinced that the storyboarding strategy was significant in enabling pupils to think visually and focus on action before attempting to put words into their characters mouths. As one teacher commented - "our pupils enjoyed their time with you and I am sure we'll be referring to your lessons in the future".

The sheer volume of strong material presented me with the challenge of making selections for the final draft. In the end, as is always the case, the practicalities of production budget and timescale dictated the outcome. Nevertheless, I am confident that many pupils will recognise their input and should feel rightly proud of themselves when they see the final cut.

## **The Filming**

Replico's film production capability has developed significantly in recent years. This is largely due to opportunities presented by the *Arts Across the Curriculum* programme.

This, combined with a strong script, an experienced professional cast, a superb location in Dean Castle, Kilmarnock and favourable weather conditions led to a highly enjoyable and successful shoot. I would like to extend my gratitude in particular to actors George Drennan, Stephen Clyde and Rosalind Sydney for their tremendous input to the project.

## **Pupil comments**

*It was very interesting to learn about local history and learn how to write a script.*

*I enjoyed the slideshows and learning how to write scripts and storyboards.*

*I enjoyed learning about John Nisbet and drawing a storyboard.*

*It was very relaxed and we learned new things about the covenanters but also Ayrshire.*

*We learned about our own history that we didn't know a lot about.*

*It was fun and interesting. I have learnt about the famous covenanters and the history surrounding them – also about scenes and movies.*

*We enjoyed the storyboards the best. We also liked learning about the covenanters in general.*

*I enjoyed working in groups and drawing the storyboards.*

*I enjoyed it when Joe showed us a powerpoint on all the historic faces of the past.*

*I learned how important the church was years ago.*

*I enjoyed it because as well as using our drama skills, we also used things we learned in history.*

*The elements I enjoyed most were making up the scripts and also working with Joe was a lot of fun.*

*I found it quite interesting to learn how people were murdered fighting for their religion.*

## **Curriculum for Excellence – Outcomes and experiences**

Following the publication of CfE outcomes an informal consultation with teachers concluded in retrospect that the project made powerful connections with the following in addition to numerous expressive arts outcomes.

### **Literacy and English**

#### **Listening and Talking**

As I listen or watch, I can:

- clearly state the purpose and main concerns of a text and make inferences from key statements
- compare and contrast different types of text
- gather, link and use information from different sources and use this for different purposes.

**LIT 4-04a**

I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.

**LIT 3-06a / LIT 4-06a**

## **Writing**

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

**LIT 3-20a / LIT 4-20a**

I can justify my choice and use of layout and presentation in terms of the intended impact on my reader.

**LIT 4-24a**

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.

**LIT 3-26a / LIT 4-26a**

I can convey information, describe events, explain processes or concepts, and combine ideas in different ways.

**LIT 3-28a**

## **Social Studies**

By studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it.

**SOC 4-04a**

I can describe the main features of conflicting world belief systems in the past and can present informed views on the consequences of such conflict for societies then and since.

**SOC 4-04b**

I can describe the factors contributing to a major social, political or economic change in the past and can assess the impact on people's lives.

**SOC 3-05a**

Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time.

**SOC 3-06b**

## **Religious and Moral Education**

I can explain the contribution of Christian beliefs to the development of Scotland, now and in the past.

**RME 4-01b**

Having reflected upon and considered a range of beliefs, belief systems and moral viewpoints, I can express reasoned views on how putting these beliefs and values into action might lead to changes in society

**RME 4-09a**

I am able to offer a basic analysis of the origins and development of beliefs and morality.

**RME 4-09d**

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