

## Mitchell and Kenyon DVD Collection teacher notes

### The Mitchell and Kenyon Collection in GCSE history

#### Britain in the early 1900s: a time of change?

##### Objective

To establish the contrasting aspects of Edwardian Britain.

##### Suggested films

**58: *Pendlebury Colliery (1901)***

**614: *Tram Ride into Halifax (1902)***

These films are very evocative of the old view of nineteenth century Britain, involving heavy industry with large workforces based on coal power. It is efficient and profitable but grimy with a downbeat feel. The films remind us that much about the Victorian period did not die with Victoria.

**246: *Panoramic View of the Morecambe Sea Front (1901)***

**525: *University Procession on Degree Day, Birmingham (1901)***

**266: *Audley Range School, Blackburn (c1904)***

**553: *Leeds Athletic and Cycling Club Carnival (1902)***

These films remind us that for the majority of the population life had improved and continued to improve. The middle classes were increasing in number. Many were gaining university qualifications and going into professions such as medicine or science. Most working class children now received a basic education. For the majority of the working classes living and working conditions were improving and leisure time could be spent at sports events, fairs or the seaside, thanks to cheap railway travel on Britain's extensive rail network.

**172: *Manchester Street Scene (1901)***

**168: *Electric Tram Rides from Forster Square, Bradford (1902)***

**186: *Jamaica Street, Glasgow (1901)***

These films indicate that the early 1900s were a time of change. The street scenes show the phenomenal growth in cities and the wealth of jobs and businesses done in them. Trams and trains transported people with ease over distances which would previously have been unthinkable. Electricity; telephone, telegraph and other technologies were transforming communications and work.

## Lesson ideas

### Worksheet

- Start by showing films 58 and 614. Explain that these scenes are from the early 1900s. Then ask students to explain why the scenes could well be showing Britain much earlier, if the film technology had been available at the time.
- Now ask students to examine films 246, 525 and 553. Ask students to explain how these films show that life in the early 1900s had moved on since Victorian times. You could provide students with prompts like:
  - Opportunities for the middle classes
  - Leisure time and spending money
  - Transport technology.
- Following on from this discussion, ask students to study the street scenes in films 172, 168 and 186. For each film, ask them to look out for features which are still around today, such as: surfaced roads, lighting, shops and businesses, public transport, electricity, telephones.
- Conclude by asking students to write a paragraph or create a cloud diagram with the title: 'How modern was Britain in the early 1900s?'

## **Why are parades useful in understanding British society before the Great War?**

### **Objectives**

To use films as sources of evidence and to understand more about pre-war society.

### **Suggested films**

#### **525: *University Procession on Degree Day, Birmingham (1901)***

One important function of the parade was to celebrate an achievement of some sort. Graduation ceremonies were a chance for proud families to cheer and applaud their relatives who had gained a degree.

#### **173: *Manchester Band of Hope Procession (1901)***

#### **617: *Halifax Catholic Procession (c1905)***

These two films reveal a mixture of motives behind them. One is to reassert the respectability of particular communities by showing that they can organise a parade and make sure that those in it were properly dressed and equipped and marched in good order. Another key purpose was to bring attention to particular causes. Religion was very important in the early 1900s. Religious groups were often linked to other movements, like the temperance movement, which tried to limit the sale of alcohol and help those affected by it.

#### **461: *Torpedo Flotilla passing through the Manchester Ship Canal (1901)***

#### **422: *Lord Roberts' Visit to Manchester (1901)***

Another hugely important aspect of British life was respect for the military – the army and navy. It is hardly surprising that the port of Liverpool should make a special effort to commemorate the achievements of Nelson. After the Boer War of 1899–1902 generals Kitchener and Roberts were national heroes, a status gained partly with the help of the new mass medium of popular newspapers.

#### **263: *Royal Proclamation of Death of Queen Victoria, Blackburn (1902)***

Politics was another very important feature of the period. By this time most working men (but no women) could vote. The new Labour Party was beginning to gain support among the working classes. Elections in 1910 and 1911 were bitterly fought. So were many local elections. This film does not explain the issue under debate in Blackburn, but it is clear that people care about the issue.

#### **622: *Bradford Coronation Day (1902)***

In the 1900s, especially after the Boer War, the British Empire became a powerful symbol of Britain's power and prosperity and its importance on the world stage. This celebration of the coronation of Edward VII shows clearly that people saw the new monarch as Emperor rather than just King.

## Lesson ideas

### [Worksheet](#)

All of these films show one type of parade or another. There were regular processions or parades in Victorian towns. Historians believe that these parades tell us a great deal about what mattered to Victorians. For example:

- a) Parades were a good opportunity to show how respectable and reliable you, your family and your community were. You could show this by how well organised the parade was; the quality of costumes and clothing; the organisation, discipline and preparation which had gone into the event.
  - b) Parades were an opportunity for a community to work together to create costumes, floats, banners and so on to promote or celebrate something which was important to them.
  - c) A prominent theme behind parades was religion.
  - d) Another important theme of parades was to promote a political cause, such as a political party, or a cause like trade unionism or temperance.
  - e) Some parades celebrated the achievements of the armed forces.
  - f) Many parades stressed the importance of the monarchy and the Empire.
- Ask students to watch each of the films in turn. Ask them to note down examples of a–f above.
  - Now ask students to decide for each film how important each of factors a–d was. Tell them to express this importance as a percentage.
  - Finally, you could ask students to investigate the extent to which these parades either hide or fail to show some of the main issues concerning British people and their leaders in the early 1900s. These were issues such as poverty, health, housing, the unemployed, working conditions (especially for casual labourers), child welfare. These can all be investigated at the Learning Curve exhibition on Britain 1906–1918 (<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/britain1906to1918/default.htm>).

## Were British people ready for the Great War?

### Objective

To preview the shock which the Great War caused to British society between 1914 and 1918.

### Suggested films

**663 and 666: *Lieutenant Clive Wilson and the Tranby Croft Party (1902)***

**??: *A Sneaky Boer (date unknown)***

These are fascinating films shot for popular consumption during the Boer War but using British locations rather than South Africa. They are also staged and have a clear patriotic, propaganda element. It is hard to get much impression of the nature of the fighting from such material.

**248: *Morecambe Church Lads' Brigade at Drill (1901)***

This film shows a boys' marching band in Morecambe in 1901. This type of activity was a common pastime for boys. The Boys' Brigade was formed in 1883 as an organisation to give obedience and self-discipline to boys. There were Church of England equivalents to the brigade. There was also the very popular Scouts movement, formed by military man Baden Powell in 1909. All of this meant that many British boys had some familiarity with the outdoor life of a soldier and also the discipline that went with it.

**58: *Pendlebury Colliery (1901)***

This film shows miners at the end of a shift in the early 1900s. Many miners did volunteer to serve in the Great War, and it was said by some to be preferable to working in the mines. Soldiers; wages and food were often better. Some working class recruits actually put on weight when they signed up to the army.

### Lesson ideas

#### [Worksheet](#)

In some ways, the shock of the war was enormous. In many respects, however, the experiences of the Great War were less shocking to the people of the early 1900s than they would be to people today. Death from war, disease, injury and accident were much more common then than today. Similarly, for many working people conditions at home were not substantially worse than ordinary day-to-day life in and around the trenches (with the obvious exception of enemy fire). Poor working class recruits didn't suffer a significant increase in hardship and were probably better fed than at home, where life expectancy was usually short.

- Start by asking students what they remember from their studies in Year 9 about the Great War. You could use a range of stimulus material from a vast range of websites. A good starting point is the Learning Curve resource (<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/greatwar/default.htm>).

- Now explain that you are going to examine how great a shock the Great War was to British people. Ask them to put what they feel was the impact of the war on British people on a scale of 0–10.
- Next, present some statements to students and ask them to decide how plausible they seem:
  - a) Before the Great War people had no idea about the nature of modern warfare
  - b) For many soldiers, serving in the army was not a great shock to the system – their civilian life was almost as hard.
- Now show films and ask students to compare these films with impressions from films of the Great War they have seen and evaluate how far films such as these really did inform people about the nature of the fighting in South Africa.
- Next, ask students to consider how far they think people accepted these reports as true. There are some useful sources on the worksheet to help with this task.
- After this, show the students films 248 and 58 and ask them to discuss whether these films have changed their views on statement b, above.
- Finally, ask students to take a class vote on a scale of 0–10. See if they have changed their view.