

# RELIQS

Idle ponderings of the Travelling History Company

## Bristol and America



We have had some fun hunting down the origins of the American flag. There are many theories of course but our favourite, being from Bristol, lies with John Cabot. Or rather, his sponsor Richard Ameryke. You can find the stars and stripes of his coat of arms (incorporated into that of Robert Poyntz) in the Lord Mayors Chapel by College Green.

## Historic Astronomy

We have also had a lot of fun on the historic astronomy front, particularly at Gloucestershire International School. Recreating the 17th century solar observations of Thomas Harriott (using somewhat safer methods), we have learnt about sunspots and the possibility of celestial imperfection (which simply shouldn't happen!). We have also been conducting some practical astronomy replicating the 1650 discovery of Mizar as a double star by Giovanni Riccioli.

## A very happy New Year

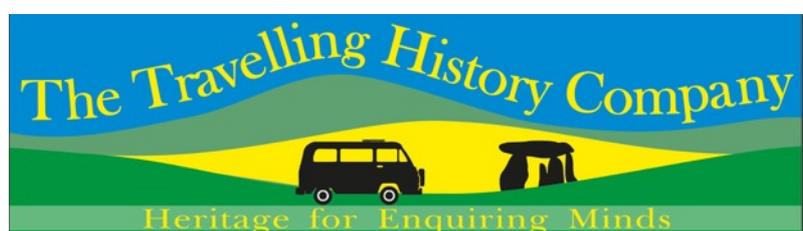
We hope all our readers had a great Christmas and we wish all our friends, colleagues and customers the very best for 2018. 2017 has been a very busy and exciting year with all sorts of fascinating projects undertaken and in hand.

Our work in schools has taken us from the Lower Palaeolithic right up to the Industrial Revolution. From Bronze Age murder mysteries to exploring advertisements in 19th century newspapers. Early chocolate bars and visits to "penny universities", perhaps better known today as coffee shops, have featured in our activities.

The work of the Travelling History Company is leaning decidedly towards education, delivering history and astronomy to schools and supporting this with our field trips. In this newsletter we briefly summarise a couple of highlights of 2017 and unveil some plans for 2018.

### *Out and about*

We have conducted lots of local prehistoric research as part of our work at Westbury C of E Academy. Hidden Bronze Age barrows, Neolithic tombs lurking in front gardens, Roman finds in swimming lakes and Anglo Saxon masonry buried under church staircases reveal the extraordinary depth of the history in Westbury on Trym. These are themes we have been exploring with primary school children. And who could resist an excursion to a rainy "Dead Man's Hill"? We have run school trips for older students to Gloucester Docks in pursuit of industrial archaeology and to Bristol Museum



This has been part of a term long theme of reconciling science and faith in the 17th century focussing on the emerging science of astronomy and antiquarianism.



Our effort at Mizar and Alcor through our 104mm refractor. Mizar was the first star to be photographed (in 1857), and again by us in 2017, and probably several times in between!

### For next year

Continuing the astronomy theme we plan to combine our historic observation with some cutting edge telephone technology that our students can really relate to.

We are also off on a big trip to China to deliver history and English lessons to students in Zhengzhou. We are particularly excited about this as Zhengzhou lies in the Yellow River valley, the cradle of the Chinese Neolithic and just a train journey away from Yinxu (Anyang), the source of so many oracle bones, the ancient capital of the Shang Dynasty.

and M Shed in search of Bristol's amazing heritage

Further afield we have been hunting down rock art on Ilkeley Moor and 13th century horse burials in deepest Gloucestershire. We have contemplated Mesolithic footprints in the Severn Estuary and conducted Mesolithic excavation work on Exmoor courtesy of our friend and archaeologist Paula Gardiner.

And of course, our lego skeletons have been busy demonstrating different burial styles in the class room and at archaeology festivals and summer fairs in the Cotswolds and West Country.



In light of the upcoming activity per the narrative on the left, we anticipate a bit of a China theme in 2018. However, closer to home we are also planning some family events in and around Westbury on Trym and some astronomy sessions over the course of the next couple of months. Do keep in touch with us and again, very best wishes for a prosperous and historic 2018 from all of us here at The Travelling History Company.