

TEACHING HISTORY. TEACHING ANYTHING REALLY.

Teaching history was officially my first job in Balliol Boys Secondary Modern in Bootle. My predecessor popped in to offer advice.

First week the Tudors. Second week the Stuarts. Third week the Hanoverians. Trouble was that it is in the third week of the school year that kids develop colds. Miss that week and you never got the Hanoverians.

Not quite my style. Among the things I could do, back in the days when photocopying was science fiction, was to draw an Elizabethan warship on the blackboard. And so the Armada, the relationships between Spain and France and Britain. Also the origins of the Tudors. Welsh of course!

By the way, there were Welsh speaking kids in Bootle.

“How do you teach?” I once asked an older friend. “Tell the kids interesting things.” Ofsted would have gone bananas.

Is fun allowed in the classroom today?

As for smoking in the playground. If you caught someone a tiresome procedure had to be followed. I preferred to stop just short of catching them, giving them time to put out the ciggies. Then they would relight them after I left. But I would wander back so it all started again.

Well, we both knew the game. In my amateurish way I was trying to cut down their smoking while avoiding punishment.

“Can I go to the toilet?” “Of course you can, just leave your cigarettes on my desk.” Today the word would be ‘mobile’.

Bootle, Scottie Road. Thank you so much.

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