

**TEACHING RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

**ON THE STORY OF GEORGE BASS**

**AND THE VILLAGE OF ASWARBY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

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## **Introduction**

This resource gives ideas on teaching activities associated with the story of George Bass and Aswarby for teachers of primary school children.

This links, at time of writing, to the following National Curriculum programmes of study <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

There are many ways to link the activities in the pack to the National Curriculum, a few suggestions are listed below.

**Part One** – tells the story of George Bass which can be told to a class of pupils with suggested dressing up and related suggestions of follow-up activities.

The life of George Bass covers:

- KS1 history programme of study on significant historical events, people and places in their own locality;
- KS2 history programme of study on a local history study.

**Part Two** – tells interesting facts on the village of Aswarby. The facts can be photocopied and used as a reference source material.

- Topic 1 – KS2 Mathematics – present data using bar charts
- Topics 2 and 4 – KS2 Geography – use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs and digital technologies.
- Topic 3 - All schools are also required to teach religious education at all key stages.
- Topic 5 – KS1 History – Pupils should be taught about significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.
- Topic 6 - KS1 Geography – use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of the school and its grounds and the key human and physical surrounding environment.
- Topic 7 – KS2 Geography – Geographical Skills and fieldwork – use the eight points of the compass .... to build knowledge of the United Kingdom .... Turn into a KS1 task by narrowing the topic to towns in the simple compass directions of East, West, North and South.
- Topics 8 to 10 - KS1 and KS2 Writing - It is essential that teaching develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Plan their writing by identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own.

## **PART ONE – the story of George Bass**

### **1. Young George as a farmer's son in Aswarby**

#### Dressing up –

- George: flat cap, tweed jacket/smock, straw, shepherd's crook
- George's father and grand-father: similar dress and perhaps a moustache, grey wig etc to depict older men
- Other items – farm-yard animal masks

#### Story –

There was a boy called George Bass born in the village called Aswarby. His father and grand-father were also called George Bass. They were both churchwardens of St Denys' Church in Aswarby, Lincolnshire.

George was baptised in the church's font on 3 February 1771.

He was a farmer's son surrounded by plants and animals of the countryside.

The village of Aswarby was built near a local spring. The water of the spring had medicinal properties which people travelled from far away to take its waters which was said to cure many ailments.

#### Activities -

- View the font at St Denys' Church.
- Give an explanation of infant baptism in the Church of England, compared with similar ceremonies in other religions.
- Explain the role of a churchwarden. (A churchwarden is the person who has been chosen by the church congregation to help the vicar of the parish with administration and other duties.)
- Explain what a natural spring is and explain what an artesian well is (using the example of Anglian Water's artesian wells between Aswarby and Osbournby).

## 2. George's move to Boston

### Dressing up -

- George as a school boy – blazer and school cap
- Photos of old sailing boats for showing to children.

### Story -

When George was six, his father sadly died. George moved with this mother to live in Boston, an area where his mother's family came from.

His mother was keen that he got a good education and sent him to Boston Grammar School.

Boston is on the Lincolnshire coast and a trading port where lots of ships would come and go. George would go down to the busy docks and look at all the grand ships. He loved the boats and wanted to be a sailor. [Note: Boston, then, was a major port of departure from the UK e.g. the Pilgrim Fathers departed from Boston to settle in America to practise their particular brand of Christianity.]

### Activities –

- View the tomb of George Bass's father. This table/box tomb to left as you come out of the south door of the church where you can just see the faint writing of the words "George Bass".
- Do a project on old ships. Find out what they would have traded and what life was like on the ships. Compare with modern day cargo ships.
- Compare how schools have changed over time. For further reference see *Education in England: a brief history* by Derek Gillard, 2011  
<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/>

### **3. George as a surgeon**

#### Dressing up -

Two options, either as a

- modern day surgeon – white coat, stethoscope
- a surgeon in Bass's day – jacket, toy knife

#### Story –

George's mother wanted him to have a good profession. He trained in medicine in Boston and at the age of 18, he went to London to train to be a surgeon.

#### Activities –

Explain what it was like being a surgeon in Bass's day e.g. anaesthetic hadn't been invented, no stethoscopes, surgeons only really had a knife or a hand-saw (so surgery was really painful and only a last resort). Medics of that day were still learning about the body, how it was made-up and how it worked.

### **4. George joins the Royal Navy**

#### Dressing up –

- Old fashioned tri-cornered sailor's hat
- Make a boat – get a large cardboard box, cut off the top and bottom, flatten it out and draw the sides of a boat on each side, tie ribbon/string to each side to put over child's shoulders or make hand holes for child to step inside and carry.

#### Story –

Once George had trained to be a surgeon, he joined the Royal Navy as a naval surgeon and sailed on ships that he had admired as a boy.

He travelled on various trips with the Navy. One of these journeys involved sailing all the way around the world to Australia in 1795.

#### Activities –

- Mathematical exercise – work out how long it would take to walk to Australia based on how many miles and how long it takes to walk from children's school to Aswarby against the distance from the UK to Australia (9,443 miles direct).
- Look at an atlas to find out where Australia is.

## 5. George in Australia

### Activities –

- Show inflatable kangaroo and photos/models of other Australian insects and animals.
- Play Aboriginal CD.
- Show the flags of Australia.

### Story –

When George arrived in Australia, it was a very different country to England. It was full of strange sounds and animals.

There was not much work for him as a surgeon so he did a lot of exploring and cataloguing different plants and animals. In fact, he was one of the first Europeans to describe the Australian marsupial, the wombat. He sent his findings back to England where they were published. As acknowledgement to his work, he was elected as an Associate to a natural history society called, the Linnean Society.

It is also said he was the first Europeans to climb Mount Wellington in Tasmania (1,271 metres high above sea level).

He also mapped a lot of the local coastline in a little boat called the *Tom Thumb*.

On one adventure, in 1798, he and one of his sailing mates, Matthew Flinders who was also from Lincolnshire (Donington), sailed in a boat called the *Norfolk*, around what was thought to be a large headland but they sailed all the way around and discovered it was in fact an island. This island is now called Tasmania.

The stretch of water between the island and the mainland was named after George and is called *Bass Strait*. This was a huge discovery as previously all ships thought they had to sail all the way around Tasmania and did not realise that they could take a short cut through the Bass Strait.

### Activities –

- Explain how the proper term for the local people is 'indigenous Australians' but sometimes known as 'Aboriginal Australians'. These are the people who first inhabited the land of Australia.
- Go out and map your local area/village. What is the highest hill/mountain near where you live?
- Make a list plants and animals you find on a day's outing.

- Research what a 'wombat' looks like. Find out more about the native plants and animals of Australia. Find out what a marsupial is.
- Compare the flags of Australia. Explain what the symbols represent. Design a flag for your home/village/town.

## Flags



The Australian flag uses three prominent symbols: the Union Flag, the Commonwealth Star (also the *Federation Star*, bottom left of the flag) and the Southern Cross (or *Crux*, five stars on the right of the flag).

In its original usage as the flag of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Union Flag combined three heraldic crosses which represent the constituent countries of the United Kingdom (as constituted in 1801)

- The red St George's Cross of England
- The white diagonal St Andrew's Cross of Scotland
- The red diagonal St Patrick's Cross of Ireland

The Union Flag is thought to symbolise Australia's history as six British colonies and the principles upon which the Australian Federation is based, although a more historic view sees its inclusion in the design as demonstrating loyalty to the British Empire.

The Commonwealth Star, also known as the Federation Star, originally had six points, representing the six federating colonies. In 1908, a seventh point was added to symbolise the Papua and any future territories.

The Southern Cross is one of the most distinctive constellations visible in the Southern Hemisphere, and has been used to represent Australia since the early days of British settlement.



The **Australian Aboriginal Flag** is a flag that represents Aboriginal Australians. It is one of the official flags of Australia, and holds special legal and political status, but it is not the "Australian National Flag".

The symbolic meaning of the flag colours (as stated by Harold Thomas) is:

- Black – represents the Aboriginal people of Australia
- Yellow circle – represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector
- Red – represents the red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies and Aboriginal peoples' spiritual relation to the land

The Australian Aboriginal Flag was designed in 1971 by Aboriginal artist Harold Thomas, who is descended from the Luritja people of Central Australia and holds intellectual property rights to the flag's design. The flag was originally designed for the land rights movement, and it became a symbol of the Aboriginal people of Australia.



The official **flag of Lincolnshire** was unveiled at five separate ceremonies across the county on 24 October 2005. The flag was chosen in a popular vote organised by BBC Radio Lincolnshire along with *Lincolnshire Life* magazine.

The red cross is the **Saint George's Cross** representing England. Yellow represents the crops grown in the county, as well as the nickname "Yellowbellies" given to people born and bred in Lincolnshire. Blue represents both the sea of the East coast and the wide skies of Lincolnshire, and green symbolises the rich lushness of fenland fields. The fleur-de-lys is a recognised symbol of the City of Lincoln.

Source: wikipedia



## **6. What happened next to George Bass?**

### Story -

George came back to England and on 8 October 1800. He married Elizabeth Waterhouse at St James's Church in Westminster, London. She was the sister of Henry Waterhouse, Bass's former shipmate and captain.

In January 1801, George set sail again for Australia, leaving Elizabeth behind. Though the couple wrote to each other, they did not meet again, as he never returned to England.

What became of Bass is unknown. He set sail on his last voyage in a ship called the *Venus* in February 1803 but he and his crew were never seen again. His plan was to go to Tahiti and perhaps on to the Spanish colonies on the coast of Chile to buy provisions and bring them back to Sydney.

Today, George Bass is remembered through the many places named after him, the books written about him and he is taught about to pupils in Australian schools. A boy born in Aswarby who did great things and who is still remembered today.

### Activities –

- Search the internet to find references to George Bass today. For example:
  - The most obvious place named after explorer George Bass is Bass Strait. This is the strait that lies between the Australian states of Victoria and Tasmania.
  - In Victoria, there is a town named Bass, 110 km southeast of Melbourne, and the Bass Highway which leads south along the eastern shore of Western Port.
  - The southern shore of Victoria, near Phillip Island, has come to be known as the Bass Coast, and Victoria has a Bass River.
  - Tasmania also has the Bass Highway, as well as the Federal and State electoral divisions of Bass.
  - New South Wales has a headland named Bass Point, as well as Bass Hill, a Sydney suburb.
  
- Use as an inspirational story about how a boy born in this local village became a surgeon, joined the Royal Navy and sailed the world, making exciting discoveries which are still remembered today. Get pupils to suggest what they would like to do when they grow up.
  
- Do a diversity project on people of different nationalities living together. Explain the impact of exploration (e.g. colonisation) and how we are still exploring today (e.g. trips to Saturn).

## **PART TWO**

### **Other teaching activities based on the village of Aswarby in Lincolnshire where George Bass was born**

Related teaching activities relating to the village of Aswarby where George Bass was born include:

- Source material is presented on “*Eleven Interesting facts about Aswarby*” which follows the below list of topic project work. The facts present a source of stimulation to suggested project work.

Other materials available from St Denys’ Church, Aswarby:

- An i-spy booklet and worksheet entitled “*Let’s discover Aswarby*”
- A search-and-find sheet on *The many faces of St Denys* - a collection of photographs of gargoyles, grotesques and carved heads around St Denys’ Church

Suggested project work on *Ten Interesting facts about Aswarby*

**Topic 1** – Here is a list of common endings of place names:

- by – is Danish (Viking) meaning “village”
- ham – is England meaning a “village” or “estate”
- thorp – is Danish (Viking) meaning “hamlet” or “small settlement”, which depended on a bigger settlement nearby
- ton – is English meaning “farm” or “hamlet”.

Draw a bar chart showing the number of places with these various endings within your county compared with other counties. Investigate any common endings of place names in other countries.

**Topic 2** – Write a website report to describe the place where you live. Include photographs and draw a map of your local area.

**Topic 3** – Investigate different places of worship and what they look like from the outside. What are the similarities and differences between buildings within any one faith? What are the key things you would find in the different places of worship and what are they used for?

**Topic 4** – Draw a map of Lincolnshire and mark places of special interest – for example, Lincoln Cathedral, Belton House, Boston Stump. Write a short description of each place named.

**Topic 5** – Who is your local Member of Parliament? Name other significant people who come from Lincolnshire. Write a summary of an individual for an intranet page. This can be either someone you know or someone famous.

**Topic 6** – Plan an expedition around your school or place that you live. Draw a map of your route and/or describe the route in words and pictures of key features along the route. Get a friend to test the route and make any revisions if needed.

**Topic 7** – Look up the train timetable and work out how long it would take you to get from Sleaford to one town to the East, West, North, South South-East, South-West, North-East and North-West in the UK -

<https://ojp.nationalrail.co.uk/service/planjourney/search>

Work out how many changes would you need to make to get to your destination. Search a web for a site which tells you distances and times it would take to travel by car along the same routes.

**Topic 8** – Write a ghost story. Consider what makes stories scary? Write down a list of scary words and try to introduce them into your story. Will the story have a happy ending? Who will be the characters? Try to write a friendly ghost story. What are different words for a ghost? Dress up and act your story. How can you say words to make them sound scarier? (***Please note*** - that the story of *Lost Hearts* is not suitable for primary aged pupils given the horror nature of the book.)

**Topic 9** – What is an agricultural show? What happens at one? Why are they important? Investigate what breeds of farm animals come from Lincolnshire and which ones are now extinct. Many agricultural engineers have trade stands at these shows – find out what different types of farm machinery there are and how they have changed over time. Design a poster for a local agricultural show or garden fete. Write a newspaper article about the event.

**Topic 10** – What is an elephant? How big is an elephant? What do they eat? What are the different types of elephant and where do they come from? Many circuses no longer have animals, what other acts do they have? Write a story about a circus and draw pictures to illustrate the story.

**Topic 11** – Describe different punishments for being bad. What does being ‘bad’ mean? What does being ‘good’ mean? What are the rewards and benefits of being ‘good’? Write a story about a bad child and how they changed to be good.

## Eleven Interesting Facts About Aswarby



**Fact 1: Aswarby is mentioned in the Domesday Book** - Aswarby is recorded as “Aswardebi” in the Domesday Book – a manuscript record of a survey of England and Wales completed in 1086 by order of William the Conqueror. It was written in Medieval Latin. The Domesday Book mentioned that the land of Aswarby was held by three people: Gilbert De Gant, Wido De Credon and the local priest, Ralph.\*

**Fact 2: The village moved!** - Aswarby was originally situated near a spring which was a medicinal spring of some note. The village houses became dilapidated and the road needed moving to drier land. Hence, the village moved around 500 yards to its present position.

**Fact 3: It has a beautiful church** - The village church of St Denys is a beautiful Grade I listed building. Parts of the building date back to the 12th, 14th and 15th centuries.

**Fact 4: The village had a grand hall** - Aswarby Hall was a beautiful mansion set in wooded parkland. It was built on the site of earlier medieval houses and partly dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with Georgian and Victorian extensions. It became the house of the Carre Harvey family and later, the Whichcote family seat. It was demolished in 1951, leaving just two stone pillars which had been at the entrance gate to the Hall from the old main road. The stables to the Hall were converted into a family house in 1969 by the architect, Edward Playne (who was President of the Architectural Association in 1960-61) for Sonia and Nicholas Playne (descendants of the Whichcote family).

**Fact 5: There are links to the Whichcote Baronetcy** – In 1723, Aswarby Estate was bought by Sir Francis Whichcote (1692-1775), the third Baronet and Member of Parliament for Cambridgeshire. The Whichcote Baronetcy, of the Inner Temple in the City of London, was a title in the Baronetage of England, It was created on 2 April 1660 to reward Jeremy Whichcote (c.1614-1677) for his services to the exiled King Charles II. Sir Jeremy, previously Solicitor General to Prince Rupert of the Rhine, sheltered the King’s agents and friends. The title became extinct on the death of the tenth Baronet, Sir Hugh Whichcote (1874-1949).

**Fact 6: George Bass was born in Aswarby** - Born at Aswarby in 1771, son of a farmer, George Bass become a naval surgeon and travelled to Australia. There he explored and mapped the coastline. He and his more famous contemporary Matthew Flinders – also from

Lincolnshire – proved that Tasmania was an island and not part of mainland Australia as European explorers had originally thought. The stretch of water between Tasmania and mainland Australia was named the Bass Strait after George Bass.

**Fact 7: Aswarby had a railway station** - The 'Aswarby and Screddington Railway Station' was a station which was actually situated closer to Screddington village. It was on the Great Northern Railway between Bourne and Sleaford. It opened in 1872 and was originally shown on maps as Aswarby Station. By 1905, it was shown as Aswarby and Screddington Station. It was closed to passengers in 1930 and entirely closed in 1956. The old station building is just off the Mareham Lane towards Screddington.\*\* It is believed that the Royal train stopped for the night near Burton Pedwardine woods en-route to the North during George VI's reign (11 December 1936 to 6 February 1952), as told by the then game-keeper, Albert Reynolds.

**Fact 8: A Famous Ghost Story was set in Aswarby** - One of the most famous ghostwriters of our time, M R (Montague Rhodes) James (1862-1936), wrote a ghost story called *Lost Hearts* which was set, by name, in the now demolished Aswarby Hall. The story has been produced for television in many countries of the world. It is quite a scary story. As well as being an author, James was a medievalist scholar and Provost\*\*\* of King's College, Cambridge and later of Eton College. James was a friend of the ninth Baronet, Sir George Whichcote (1870-1946). *Lost Hearts* was published in 1895.

**Fact 9: The Lincolnshire Show was held in Aswarby** - In June 1956, Aswarby Park hosted the Lincolnshire Show, the county agricultural show, when it was a touring event and before the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society obtained a permanent base for the Showground just north of Lincoln. Newspaper articles tell of record numbers of around 42,817 people attending the Show and how the traffic was so heavy that it took two hours to drive the six miles from the nearby town of Sleaford. It was described as a lovely setting for a county event. The BBC Home Service broadcast a 30-minute live radio programme from the Show. There were record entries of animals for the different prize categories, including Lincolnshire Curly Coated pigs and Lincoln Red Shorthorn cattle. There were trade stands showing the latest trends of automation, which had the whole-hearted backing of agricultural workers as a way to minimise the human effort needed at seedtime and harvest. Long service awards were given to farmworkers. Girls were given special mention for their successes in pig judging. As well as, the Show hosting demonstrations of rural crafts, show jumping and displays by the military services - and a stand to help the war disabled.

**Fact 10 (well maybe): An elephant is buried nearby** - There is a local story that a circus elephant is buried in Aswarby Park in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The elephant belonged to a circus travelling from Sleaford to Bourne. The circus spent the night just inside the cricket park gate. Local folklore says that during the night, the elephant died and was buried in the park.

**Fact 11:** A man called James Dring was sentenced on 15 January 1789 for stealing three silver spoons, a book of roads and a loaf of bread from the house of Sir Thomas Whichcote in Aswarby. He was sentenced for seven years and deported on a ship called *Matilda* and sent to Australia.\*\*\*\*

Key

\* *Sleaford* by Edward Trollope published in Sleaford in 1872

\*\* Source: Pastscape.org.uk part of Historic England website

\*\*\* *Provost* – a senior academic administrator

\*\*\*\*Source: Lincolnshire Archives: “*Lincs to the past*”, database of transported convicts 1788-1868; reference name: convict 536

Other information taken from various newspaper articles from no longer printed local newspapers and *Kelly’s Directory of Lincolnshire*, 1933

Picture of St Denys’ Church taken from *Sleaford* by Edward Trollope published in Sleaford in 1872.

### **Other teaching resources**

**Commonwealth education pack** – including classroom activity sheets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/department-for-education-launches-commonwealth-education-pack>

The classroom resource, which is aimed at pupils in KS2 and KS3, contains four Commonwealth themed classroom activities, including a ‘Fun with Flags’ game and a ‘Great Women of the Commonwealth’ themed activity. You can view and download the pack from TES Resources <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/commonwealth-2018-classroom-activities-pack-11819134>

**National Maritime Museum school resources** <https://www.rmg.co.uk/plan-your-visit/schools/national-maritime-museum/about-our-school-resources>

**The Linnean Society school resources** <https://www.linnean.org/learning/teaching/primary-resources>

**British Council**, Schools Online, Classroom Resources For Teachers

[https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/find-classroom-resources/choose-resource/search?type=internal&combine=&field\\_partnership\\_type\\_value=All](https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/find-classroom-resources/choose-resource/search?type=internal&combine=&field_partnership_type_value=All)

### **Further reading**

*George Bass 1770-1803* by Keith Macrae Bowden, Oxford University Press 1952 (out of print)

*George Bass in Western Point* by Kenneth Morris and illustrated by Libby Skidmore, Bass Valley Historical Society Victoria, 1997

*The life of George Bass – surgeon and sailor of the Enlightenment* by Miriam Estensen, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London (2005)

*The letters of George and Elizabeth Bass* by Miriam Estensen, Allen & Unwin, 2009

*‘A passion for exploring new countries’ Matthew Flinders & George Bass* by Josephine Bastian, Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2016

*An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales – Volume II George Bass*, The Perfect Library, printed by Amazon and available on-line at <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00011.html>

**Educational material and reference documents to this teaching pack are available from St Denys' Church, Aswarby:**

- Information on George Bass: *In search of George Bass* (a booklet exploring the significance of George Bass today and tracing his steps in London and Boston, Lincs) and *A Boy Called George* (a children's booklet telling the story of George Bass in words and drawings) both by Sarah Mitchell
- Information on St Denys' Church and Aswarby village: *St Denys' Church, Aswarby* – a guide book based on the writings of the late Canon Frank R Money (Rector of St Denys' Church 1967–69) and the writings of Hugh Paget B.A. and Whichcote family records from Nicholas and Sonia Playne
- An i-spy booklet called *Let's Discover St Denys'* and worksheet
- *The Faces of St Denys* – a sheet of photographs of the stone grotesques and gargoyles both inside and outside St Denys' Church, together with a tick-chart
- Below is the entry for 1771 from the Aswarby Register. The second entry for that year reads "George son of George and Sarah Bass baptized February 3<sup>rd</sup>." (Reproduced with kind permission of St Denys' Church and Aswarby Estate).

