

Outline of the Mary Neal Research Day:

Aims:

- to explore in a participatory way, the concept of 'Englishness', 'tradition'
- to examine traditional British folk dance and music in a playful way
- to consult a wide range of participants to ask questions of past practice and its impact on current practice
- to develop inclusive current practice which explores the subject of Mary Neal as a character within a specific context
- to develop a trajectory towards embracing British folk dance and music as a valid and rich source of method and form in contemporary art forms

On this Mary Neal Day, the specific outcomes are:

- to consult artists from a range of disciplines to develop a scope of learning for young people in schools in autumn 2008
- to identify rewarding stimulus material for further exploration
- to inspire and excite artists with the range of potential of the story, the character, the conflict, the art forms (traditional), and the potential of the art forms to be adapted and responded to in a contemporary context.

The defining question for reflection over the whole day is:

What materials can we take into the primary schools learning programme?

Overview of activities and materials needed:

Welcome and introductions: (LN & AW)

(15)

A short but relevant game which introduces the concept of tradition/ modern

1. A glimpse of the past: (LN)

- Lucy introduces the image of Mary Neal briefly, giving some socio-historical context (20)
- Musicians to play one piece of music (5)
- Transform it in some way (all artists invited to use a rhythm/ sensation/ melody to inform a performance or exercise – eg: I might ask people to come up with a character that speaks in the same tone as the fiddle.) (15)
- Brainstorm some questions we may have about the material/ some specific problems: eg: how do we excite young people about traditional folk forms in Britain? (20)

2. Research stations:

(20)

- fragment of text (letter)
- a description of the conflict between Mary and Cecil Sharpe
- description of social life at the time

- a documentation of the dance (from the book?)
- a piece of music
- hypotheses (to be gathered by LN)

Using the materials supplied, the stations are centred around specific questions. The group can perform or present their findings or what excites them about the materials.

Report back (20)

3. what is an archive? (20)

- Janet can explore what possibilities are within the archive.

LUNCH (45)

4. body knowledge: (15)

- Rosemary to lead a session on awareness of the body

5. Taking the past into the future (40)

- In same groups as the research station, the goal of the session is to come up with a dynamic exercise (or session plan) these artists would lead as a team if they were going into a school.

6. Performance (40)

- Some groups can lead their exercises
- Musician/ dancers could do a performance, teaching some basic steps.
- Closing and Questions
- Reflecting on the shift in attitude/ or responding to what has been shared.