

Historical Role-Play



Museum staff gather the group of "sceptical" teenagers.



Everyone changes into period clothes.



The first step back in time is for everyone to introduce themselves in character.

Young people's comments from a day of historical role-play.

"Everyone was a little sceptical when we arrived early in the morning and discovered how everyone from the museum were dressed. Some of us were seized with panic...But it was more fun than I expected and the boys looked really handsome".

"It was loads of fun! The good thing was that you got to try things out and get your own picture of how it might have been at that time. It's to be highly recommended to the next eighth grade. The only down side was that there was not enough time."

"The feeling was wonderful. At first it was difficult, but after barely ten minutes we had gone back in time. I left everything behind and didn't bother about three boys who were talking about computer games".

"The best thing was probably when the socialist came to talk. Everybody was so absorbed that one got concerned about how the squire would react."

"Fun but cold. Instructive and more interesting than an ordinary museum. The wealthy had more power over people at that time."

"Most of all I remember the communal spirit".

"I thought that it would be boring, but it turned out to be great fun".

"Now we travel back to the days of old. Those that are perhaps also the new, modern days. What do we want to keep of the old, and how shall we receive everything new?"

Which path should we choose?

Which future do YOU want?

Role-play Days

In the historical role-plays with teenagers we create our roles from real people and events.

The school chooses the period. The role-play should be a natural part of the classes' education and not just a pleasant excursion. We have worked in particular with the Turn of the Century, the Middle Ages and the Iron Age.



We get started straight away with the day's chores. Some of the boys are given the task to make wooden spoons and clothes pegs.



The sailor teaches the boys how to make knots and splice ropes. His remarkable stories from his voyages should be taken with a pinch of salt. Nothing for the ears of young children!

The role-plays are carried out at historical buildings or remains where practical activities such as handicrafts and cooking are included. Moral questions, relevant for both then and now, are woven into the days events. They deal with young people's questions interpreted in a historical setting.

The historical-educational workshop, "All-Time History" at Kalmar County Museum has received funds from the foundation, The Future's Culture (Framtidens kultur), in order to carry out trials with teenagers for two years, 1999-2000 in Kalmar County. The aim is to find methods to how we can best work with young people and history.

These methods can then be spread to other parts of the country by the way of seminars and courses.



A vagrant passes by and shares his knowledge of woodworking. In return he receives coffee and rusks. He talks about the people he has met; about the socialist he has seen and heard speaking to the workers at the factory in town.



The girls have many chores to take care of. Here they are on their way to the boys with the coffee they have prepared.



It's good with a coffee break.



Then we can sit down together and talk about all the new things that have come: the telephone, the railway and steamboats. Somebody has decided to go to America. Another receives a letter from there. Can we really believe that everything is so much better over there? Should we, who choose to stay, fight for a common cause and build trade unions in order to improve life? Dare we protest, maybe even go on strike? The questions and opinions are many, but soon we will have to return to our chores.



Rag rugs and clothes have to be washed, the floors scrubbed, butter churned and food has to be prepared.



The housekeeper, Hilda, sets the girls to work, and makes sure that all the chores get done.



Still we have time for a little chat about life, boys and the dance later on.



The work day is over and the food is on the table. Pork or herrings with potatoes, onion sauce and lingonberry cream are eaten with hearty appetites.



Just as we finish our meal the socialist, that we have heard so much about, arrives. He speaks about struggle and revolution. Are we for, or against? Dare we change? The questions are many and opinions differ. The meeting finishes rapidly when the socialist is chased off and we can turn our thoughts to happier tunes when the musician comes by.



Finally a little time off after all the day's toil! We take the opportunity to dance.



The day is completed with a photograph.



The turn of the century photographer takes a black and white picture that becomes a personal memory of the day.

Interested?

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