

CARNIVAL
ARCHIVE PROJECT

○ ○ ● Schools Resource

People and Processions





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People and Processions

Processions and carnivals have been a feature of celebrations, culture and traditions in the UK for hundreds of years.

The people involved in processions have changed throughout history expressing the changing demographics, preoccupations and laws of the time from civic celebration to political resistance. The following resource explores the history of carnivals in Luton.

Processions

Processions have always been a feature of celebrations in Luton.

1400s

Guild Feasts began in Luton in the late 1400s AD these would include a procession. We have evidence for this in account books held in Bedford Record Office. [More...](#)

1800s

Jubilee celebrations were popular under Queen Victoria, due to increased communications across the country and the length of Victoria's reign (63 years, the longest of any British monarch).

1896

In Luton they held a procession to celebrate the opening of the Plait Halls. These were a form of indoor market and opened in 1869. These covered the area that is now The Mall. The Plait Halls were where straw plaits were sold that could be made into hats or bonnets.

A description of the event from the London Illustrated News January 30th 1869

...procession, with flags, music, and a guard of rifle volunteers from the Town-hall, through George-street and Cheapside, to the Waller-street entrance. The ceremony of opening took place in the Plait Hall on that side, which had been decorated with mottoes beautifully worked in straw, and hung upon the walls, besides ornamental sheaves of wheatstraw, evergreen garlands, and banners.

1919

Saturday July 19th 1919 was a national day of celebrations. In Luton, events started with a procession to the Town Hall from Luton Hoo.

Angry at the lack of jobs (servicemen had been promised that post-war Britain would be a Land fit for Heroes by the government) and the continuation of rationing, some ration books were set on fire and this quickly spread. The result was that the whole town hall was burnt down. Although riots also broke out in other towns and cities on this day, Luton was the only place to lose the whole building.

1935

The Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 saw a lot of street processions in Luton.

1939–1945

During the Second World War carnivals and parades were held during this time to raise money for the war effort.

1945

The heyday of the street party was VE Day which marked the end of war in Europe.

1950s

St Georges day parades were popular and focused on a parade of Scouts and Servicemen.

1953

This is possibly when the first Easter Bonnet parade was held to tie in with the Coronation of Elizabeth II celebrations. There was a need to revitalise the industry after the Second World War and an Easter Bonnet Parade was seen as a good way of doing this. To boost worker morale they chose a Carnival Queen from amongst the female workers in the hat factories.

1976

The first Luton Carnival as we know it. This began as a Victorian Fayre with a procession and was held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Luton becoming a Borough. Over the years the fair element has declined and now the focus is on the carnival procession.

1998

Luton Carnival acquired International status.

2007

Carnival cancelled due to heavy rain and flooding.

2009

Luton's reputation as a carnival town is cemented with the opening of the UK Centre for Carnival Arts.

2012

The Carnival was moved from May to July to coincide with the arrival of the Olympic Torch in Luton.

Carnival Processions in the 21st Century

Today processions and carnivals in the Eastern Region of the UK are used to celebrate all kinds of community and civic celebrations throughout the year as well as regularly forming part of rallies and marches on political issues.

New Year's Day (1st January)

Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is popularly called the Spring Festival, and the festivities last for 15 days. It is also referred to as the lunar new year because it starts with the new moon on the first day of the new year and ends with the full moon 15 days later.

Valentine's Day (14th February)

Shrove Tuesday

Christian carnival day on the eve of Ash Wednesday, which begins Lent, a time of fasting and devotions. Pancakes are often served.

Ash Wednesday

The beginning of the 40-day period known as Lent.

St David's Day (1st March)

Celebrating the Patron Saint of Wales.

Commonwealth Day

People use the day to promote understanding about global issues, international co-operation and the work of the modern Commonwealth.

St Patrick's Day (17th March)

Celebrating the Patron Saint of Ireland.

St George's Day (23rd April)

Celebrating the Patron Saint of England.

Easter Sunday**May Day (1st May)**

Traditional English May Day celebrations include Morris dancing, crowning a May Queen and dancing around a Maypole.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee 2012 (2nd-5th June)

To mark 60 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign.

London 2012 Olympic Games (27th July-12th August)**Lammas Day (1st August)**

The traditional harvest festival when the first bread was made from the new corn.

Notting Hill Carnival

Around a million people take to the streets of Notting Hill in West London for Europe's biggest carnival.

London 2012 Paralympic Games (29th August-9th September)**Halloween (31st October)****Bonfire Night (5th November)****Remembrance Day (11th November)**

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month marks the signing of the Armistice, on 11th November 1918, to signal the end of World War One.

Lord Mayor's Show

Civic procession in London.

St Andrew's Day (30th November)

Celebrating the Patron Saint of Scotland.

The Winter Solstice (21st December)

Christmas Day (25th December)

New Year's Eve (31st December)

Exploring the archive

Which of these events can you find images for in the Archive?

<http://carnivalarchive.org.uk>

People

Many different people are involved in carnivals and processions including:

Carnivalists

Carnivalists are carnival artists often going back generations who have taken part in carnival for years. Some these artists work professionally in carnival all year round.

Schools

Many schools take part in community carnivals or hold their own school carnivals.

Community Groups

Many community groups take part in carnivals and processions. Many different groups from different cultures are represented.

Charities

Charities often have a presence in carnival promoting their cause and involving their staff or participants in the event.

Businesses

Some businesses take part gaining recognition for their product or brand by having a presence on the streets.

Religious Groups

Religious groups across all faiths are involved in carnivals and processions and sometimes appear together in the same carnival.

Activity

Look at the archive source on page 11. This is a list of groups that took part in Luton carnival in 2012.

Can you group them into carnivalists, schools, community groups, charities, businesses and religious groups?

CARNIVAL 2012 - PROCESSION ORDER

1	Ghana Society Drummers / Sound	26	Active Polish Sound
2	Ghana Society	27	Active Polish
3	Generic Sound DJ Wesley	28	Keech Hospice care
4	Foxdell Infant School	29	Utopia Mas Sound
5	Beech Hill Primary	30	Utopia Mas
6	Leagrave Primary	31	Heart FM
7	Bushmead Primary	32	London School of Samba
8	Pirton Hill Sound	33	Make a Difference Sound
9	Pirton Hill Primary School	34	Make a difference
10	Barnfield Federation Sound	35	UKCCA Carnival Archive
11	Barnfield Federation	36	St Vincent & the Grenadines Ass S
12	Sunshine International Arts	37	St Vincent & the Grenadines Ass
13	Purbachal	38	Independent Street
14	Sponsor	39	Grassroots
15	Childrenslinks	40	Morenada Bloque Kantuta Sound
16	Uniao da Mocidade Sound	41	Morenada Bloque Kantuta
17	Uniao da Mocidade	42	Vauxhall
18	Jacana Mas Sound	43	Cancer Research UK
19	Jacana Mas	44	Om Group Sound
20	Luton Irish Forum Float	45	Om Group
21	KKWO	46	Caporales san Simon Sound
22	FIPA	47	Caporales san Simon
23	St. Kitts & Nevis Friends Carnival Sound	48	Luton Samaritans
24	St. Kitts & Nevis Friends Carnival	49	Rampage Carnival Club Sound
25	Arcoiris	50	Rampage Carnival Club

Exploring the archive

The people involved in Luton carnival have changed over the years as the town has changed. Look at the photographs in the archive of the Coronation Procession in the 1950s and Luton Carnival today.

<http://carnivalarchive.org.uk>

What is different about the people involved and what is the same?

Health and Safety

Carnival involves lots of different people of all ages. It is very important that it is safe and enjoyable.

Activity

If you were organising a carnival, what rules would you have, to make sure that everyone was safe?

1.

2.

3.

Here are the Health and Safety rules from Luton Carnival in 2012.

How many of your rules can you find?

Health and Safety Regulations

1. **Guard rails or ropes** must be provided if you have people travelling on the back of your vehicle
2. **A First Aid Box and a Fire Extinguisher** should be carried on each vehicle
3. **Passengers** must not travel on the roof of any vehicle.
4. **No children under 8** in the front of vehicles.
5. **Only a reasonable number of people** should be carried on a vehicle giving due regard to its size and type
6. **Any protruding load** should be clearly marked and not present a hazard to other road users.
7. **Exhaust outlets** should not be blocked or covered. Vehicle emissions should be kept at a minimum.
8. **Good vision** through windscreen and mirrors should be maintained at all times. Ideally the driver should have an assistant to help with vision and communication.
9. **Road fund licence** to be displayed
10. **Generators** must be placed on a firm surface on the lorry and roped or bolted securely in place. They must be suitably protected in order to avoid contact with any person on the back of the lorry but adequate ventilation must be maintained.
11. **No alcohol to be drunk or seen on floats.** If alcohol is found then the group will be asked to dispose of it. If you are caught drinking alcohol while in procession then the band will be pulled out of the procession.
12. **The use of imitation firearms and weapons** that could be considered to be intimidating please check prior to the event with the **carnival parade manager**.
13. **The use of pyrotechnics** of any kind (including blank ammunition) is not permitted.
14. **Live animals** are not permitted to take part.

The Route

Carnival organisers have to plan carefully where the procession will happen. Roads have to be closed and the carnival needs to be somewhere where everyone can see and enjoy it.

Activity

Look at a map of your local area. Can you plan your own carnival route?

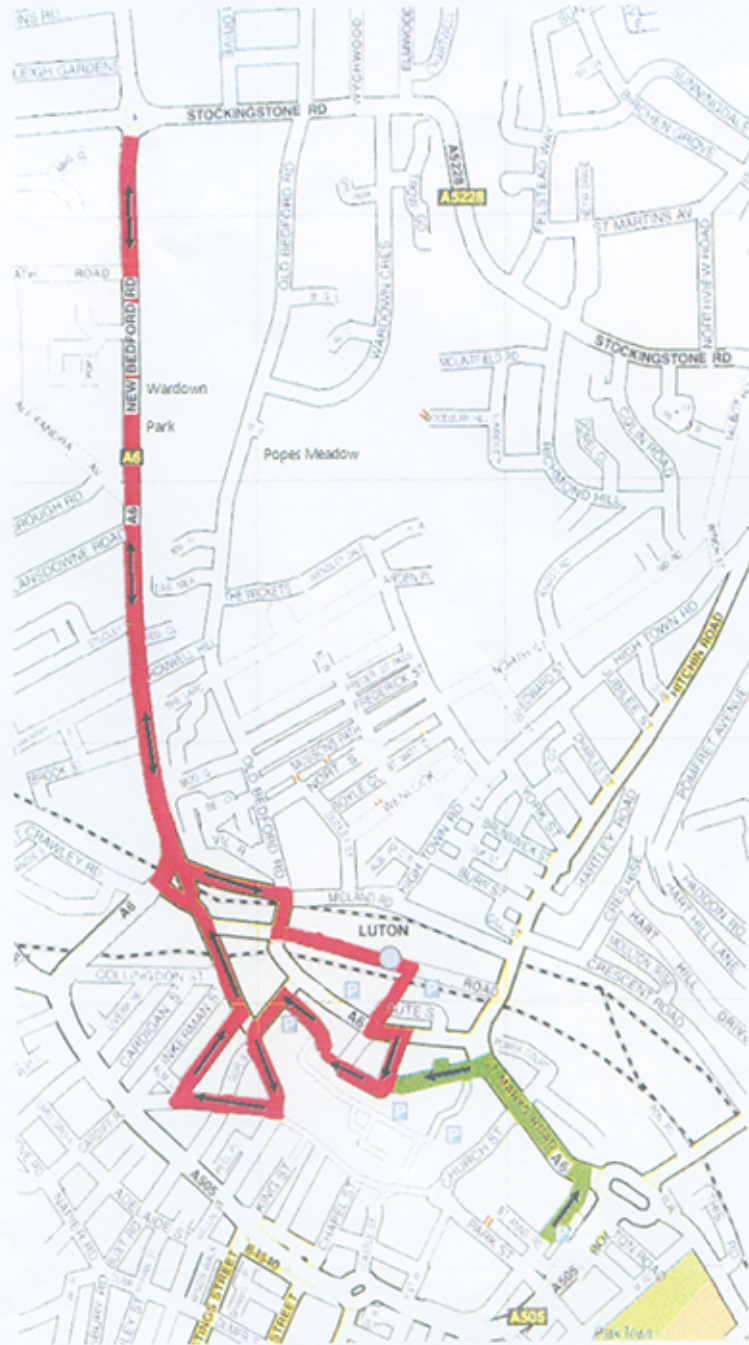
Think about

- How will you make sure everyone can see the parade?
- Do you want to start and finish in the same place?
- What things you would like to pass along the way?
- How long will it take?

Look at the map of the route from Luton Carnival 2012 below. Do you think this is a good choice of route? Why do you think it was planned in this way? Explain your opinion.

Love Luton 2012 Festival - Carnival Parade Route Sunday 8th July 2012 Map of route

N.B. Route is subject to change due to road works in central Luton



Key: Carnival Parade Route Eastbound entry route

Coronation of Elizabeth II Procession

In 1953 a street celebration was held in Luton to celebrate the coronation of Elizabeth II.

The photographs below are taken from the Luton News.



- What can you see in this procession?
- What do you notice about the people watching?
- What things are the same as Luton carnival today?
- What is different?

Activities

Activity 1

Write an eye witness account of someone in the crowd describing what they can see. Think about what they can hear and smell and how they feel.

Activity 2

Think about what conversations people might be having in the crowd. Write a short script.

Activity 3

Recreate the scene in your playground. Play big band music on the stereo to recreate the atmosphere.

Activity 4

This procession was for the Queen's Coronation. What other reasons can you think of for having a procession? Make a list.

Curriculum links Key Stage 1 and 2

Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past

Pupils should be taught to:

- b.** identify differences between ways of life at different times

Historical enquiry

Pupils should be taught:

- a.** how to find out about the past from a range of sources of information (for example, stories, eye-witness accounts, pictures and photographs, artifacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites, the use of ICT-based sources)
- b.** to ask and answer questions about the past.

Geography

Geographical enquiry and skills

- c.** use globes, maps and plans at a range of scales (for example following a route on a map)

Citizenship

Developing a healthy and safer lifestyle

Pupils should be taught:

- g.** rules for, and ways of, keeping safe, including basic road safety, and about people who can help keep them safe

Breadth of opportunities

- e.** meet and talk with people (for example, with outside visitors such as religious leaders, police officers, the school nurse)

Literacy

Reading for information:

- a.** scan texts to find information
- c.** obtain specific information through detailed reading

Drama

b. use character, action and narrative to convey story, themes, emotions, ideas in plays they devise and script.

Easter Bonnet Parade

1953

This is possibly when the first Easter Bonnet parade was held to tie in with the Coronation of Elizabeth II celebrations. Also there was a need to revitalize the industry after the Second World War and an Easter Bonnet Parade was seen as a good way of doing this. To boost worker morale they chose a Carnival Queen from amongst the female workers in the hat factories.



Activities

Activity 1

Can you design your own Easter Bonnet?

- What materials would you make it out of (taking into consideration weight, durability, the weather etc)?
- What do you need to consider when drawing your design given it is a competition?
- Use the design worksheet to draw your picture.
- Now write a step by step guide on how to make your bonnet.

Draw a picture here:

Activity 2

Imagine you are someone who was at the hat parade that day.

Can you write:

- A radio commentary describing the hats and the day's events?
- A diary entry describing your feelings about the day.
- A poem describing the sounds smells and atmosphere of the parade.

Activity 3

Why do you think hats were so important in the 1950s? Can you design a 1950s advert for your own imaginary hat? What persuasive language can you use to persuade people to buy it?

Activity 4

Have a 1950s themed week. Hold your own Easter Bonnet parade at school. Invite staff, pupils and parents to come dressed in 1950s clothes.

Teachers:

This is a link to the 48 second preview of the film of the Easter Hat Parade in Luton on the British Pathé website. Please follow the link, if you wish to see the whole video you will need to buy it from British Pathé.

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/easter-hat-parade>

Curriculum links Key Stage 1 and 2

History

Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past

Pupils should be taught to:

- b.** identify differences between ways of life at different times

Historical enquiry

Pupils should be taught:

- a.** how to find out about the past from a range of sources of information (for example, stories, eye-witness accounts, pictures and photographs, artifacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites, the use of ICT-based sources)
- b.** to ask and answer questions about the past.

Local history study

A study investigating how an aspect in the local area has changed over a long period of time, or how the locality was affected by a significant national or local event or development or by the work of a significant individual.

Historical enquiry

Pupils should be taught:

- a.** how to find out about the past from a range of sources of information (for example, stories, eye-witness accounts, pictures and photographs, artifacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites, the use of ICT-based sources)
- b.** to ask and answer questions about the past

Design and Technology

Working with tools, equipment, materials and components to make products

- a.** Select tools, techniques and materials for making their product from a suggestion by the reader

Literacy

Breadth of study

8. During the key stage, pupils should be taught knowledge, skills and understanding through addressing the following ranges of purposes, readers and forms of writing.

d.to organise and explain information

Brazilian influence in Luton Carnival 2012



At the Luton 2012 carnival the Brazilian Carnival Artist Milton Cunha worked with local UK artists to create a special float celebrating all the special things about Luton, Northampton, South End and Norwich as part of a big project called Carnival Crossroads. Here is a photograph from the Archive of Milton Cunha with the Luton Olympic torch bearer.

Carnival Float

A float is a decorated platform either built on a vehicle or towed behind one and is an important feature in many carnival parades and processions. In the UK a carnival float is often built onto a milk float or truck and decorated in a flamboyant and celebratory style. In Brazil floats are created on a huge scale and Brazilian carnival is famous for the scale and ambition of its float design. The Carnival Crossroads Float was designed to reflect the things that are important to people in the East of England.



Activities

Activity 1

Design your own float.

Teachers: Children could design around any theme that you choose. This could be 'Our local area', 'My family', 'Our class', 'Our school', 'Our community' etc.

Think about your theme. What is important to you about this place/these people? Make a list. When you have made a list choose your favourite five things and draw a picture to represent each one. These could then be cut out and mounted on card and stuck onto a model. This could be done individually, in groups or as a class. Once you have the design for the main shapes/images on the float think about what performers you might want – dancers, singers, musicians.

Children can use the design template provided to draw their costumes. They can be mounted, photocopied and added to the float.

Curriculum links Key Stage 1 and 2

Design and Technology

Working with tools, equipment, materials and components to make products

- a. Select tools, techniques and materials for making their product from a suggestion by the reader

Art and Design

Investigating and making art, craft and design

- c. represent observations, ideas and feelings, and design and make artefacts

Breadth of study

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through:

- a. Exploring a range of starting points for practical work (for example themselves, their experiences, stories, natural and man-made objects and the local environment).
- d. investigating different kinds of art, craft and design (for example in the locality, in original and reproduction form, during visits to museums, galleries and sites, on the internet).