



Dear John

A workshop from Richard O'Neill

THEME: World War 1

TIME: Flexible to meet with schools needs and requirements

VENUE: Hall or classroom

ARTIST FEE: £350 per day plus travel

Outline:

Dear John (The different kind of Hero) suitable KS2 and KS3

This workshop starts with a storytelling session about a real life soldier called John Jack Cunningham, an ordinary young man from a place called Scunthorpe. John Jack went to school, he worked with his parents and then he went off to war with thousands of other young men, but John Jack carried out the most amazing deed which earned him the very rare Victoria Cross. The only difference between John Jack and them was that he was born and raised in a Romani Gypsy family. Many believe that his upbringing travelling around and having to be strong and resourceful helped him survive and thrive in such a difficult situation. John Jack became a local celebrity and even went with his parents down to London to be presented with the VC by the King. John Jack's story tells of the heroism of 'ordinary' soldiers but also the horrors of war.

Children would be encouraged to think about the conditions John Jack endured and how he dealt with them especially being away from his family, the boredom between the fighting. They would be encouraged to think about how John Jack would be feeling. A couple of letters would be read out during the session, children would be encouraged to help with this.

Some questions would be posed and discussion encouraged, for example, did John Jack's background and being different help him survive in such an alien environment like war? What qualities do the children have that they think would help them survive? What would they miss the most about being away from home?

The workshop would last an hour, 40 minutes of interactive storytelling and another 20 minutes of children starting to write their own letters to John Jack or imagining they are him and writing to someone at home. The storyteller would help get them started with this. Teachers would be guided on how to continue this as follow up work.

Workshop Leader Bio.

Richard is an experienced professional storyteller and author who has been storytelling at the Imperial War Museum since 2005. He runs storytelling and writing workshops for children and adults throughout the UK. He delivers storytelling skills training workshops to a number of professionals including those education, health and business.

Born into a large Romani family and a 5th generation storyteller, the artist has written 9 children's books, had plays professionally performed on BBC Radio 3 and 4, the Edinburgh festival and the Soho theatre London. His clients include schools, local authorities, museums, libraries and festival organisers. He tells stories in over 100 schools a year

Recent and current clients, include Worcestershire council, Imperial War museum, (North and London), Southern Housing association, Stoke City council, Arts Council, Chorlton book festival, Writing East Midlands and a number of primary, secondary and special schools including Co-op and North East Church of England academies and the North West Employers association.

The artist is currently Writer in residence at Babington College and Medway primary through the Arts Council Mighty creative project.

He regularly creates special events for schools and others including 'Bring a Story to School Week', 'The Whittlesey Whopper', 'Woodcraft and Wordcraft' and 'Freed2Read.'

Foundation & KS1: See our new WW1 workshops for younger children.

Really interactive stories and books with original character's like Big Bob and Big Betty to the Lonely Giant and Roly Yoly and a whole range of other stories with rhymes, songs and hand carved wooden toys, all original created and written by the artist.

Dear Richard,

We had a joyful day sharing your fantastic stories. Thank you for inspiring our children (and teachers) to join you in your quest for creating tales of wonder! Thank you for the tiger book, we will enjoy sharing it with the nursery children. We are all looking forward to seeing you again in June.

Deputy Head

KS1 & KS2:

A whole range of original, creative, interactive, funny and inspiring stories all created by the artist. Learning stories, thinking stories and above all stories that inspire children and teachers to create fabulous follow up work.

Richard captures the children with his animated and humourous storytelling skills. He bases his stories on everyday people, creating characters that could do extraordinary things. He then encourages children to do the same – starting with simple everyday things and then introducing a 'what if?....'. We have since used some of the strategies and ideas in our own English lessons, while encouraging the children to write.

KS2 & KS3:

Original thought provoking and fun stories, writing workshops, storytelling skills

workshops and sessions that inspire debate and question and answer sessions. Readings from books and 'ask the author' writing discussions.

Our students really enjoyed Richard's visit. His friendliness and enthusiasm really encouraged them with their own ideas for their own stories. All students were keen to contribute. Richard managed to make them feel valued and interesting and gave them confidence to express themselves. There were many laughs but also some very thoughtful work and profound insights.

Testimonials:

Thank you Richard! We all had a wonderful day listening to your enthralling stories. All the staff were inspired by your storytelling and we look forward to welcoming you back to our school in the future. We will certainly recommend you to other schools.

I was really inspired by your visit, especially the way you related to issues and developed your stories. I loved the way you engaged our most challenging students - many of them have told me how great you were and described you as "a very funny man" There will also be a legacy from the day as our Year 8 leaders are developing a tutor based programme inspired by your talk.

I must say you caused quite an impression on everyone as staff and children alike, keep talking about you and can't wait to have your visiting again... "soon" ...they say. On behalf of my head teacher and all the staff they wish to send their heartfelt thanks for such a brilliant day.

Just to say a massive thank you for your 2 story telling sessions today. The children were truly awestruck (as were the staff) and I've never seen some of them smile so much (or the staff!!!)

Contact Richard: rroneill@aol.com
www.richardthestoryteller.weebly.com