

# TALKING MACHINES

## Talking Machines Education Resource

**Theme:** Pests

**Film Title-** Wet Wheat Pickler (Wyalong)

### About the Clip:

**Synopsis:** The Alfa Hannaford Wheat Pickler at Wyalong. During the early 20th century, Australia's wheat crops were ravaged by diseases caused by parasitic fungi which threatened the continuation of many wheat varieties. This Australian-made wheat pickling machine helped to prevent disease by agitating the wheat in chemical. This was an Australian invention in response to industry need and one where the process has not changed significantly to today.

**Duration:** 7.43 mins

### Study Module:

**Curriculum Focus:** History – Australian Curriculum

**Year:** 9 (Stage 5)

**Strand:** Historical knowledge and understanding; Historical inquiry and skills

### Theme:

- Depth Study 1: Making a Better World? – The Industrial Revolution (1750 – 1914)
- Depth Study 2: Australia and Asia – Making a Nation

### Key Concepts:

- Evidence; continuity and change; cause and effect; perspectives; empathy  
significance

### Curriculum Applicability:

- The nature and significance of the Industrial Revolution and how it affected living and working conditions, including within Australia (**ACOKFH016**)
- The experiences of men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution, and their changing way of life (**ACDSEH081**)
- Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900) (**ACDSEH090**)

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## Historical Skills:

- **Chronology, terms and concepts**
  - Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places **(ACHHS164)**
- **Analysis and use of sources**
  - Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources **(ACHHS169)**
  - Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources **(ACHHS171)**
- **Perspectives and interpretations**
  - Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past **(ACHHS172)**
  - Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) **(ACHHS173)**
- **Explanation and communication**
  - Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced **(ACHHS174)**

## General capabilities:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking**
  - Developing questions about aspects of the past that require historical argument
  - Identify and clarify information and ideas
  - Organise and process information
- **Personal and Social Capability – social awareness:**
  - Appreciate diverse perspectives
- **Intercultural Understanding**
  - Investigate culture and cultural identity
  - Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices

## Context/ Background Information:

For decades during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the wheat crops of Australia were ravaged by various diseases including bunt (stinking smut), flag smut, loose smut and take-all which were caused by parasitic fungi. Between 1900 and 1930 flag smut became so prevalent in many areas that it actually threatened the continuation of wheat growing as many of the Farrer and post-Farrer wheat varieties were susceptible to this disease. Various wheat pickling machines were devised to combat these diseases which including placing a bag of

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seed into a container of copper sulphate ('bluestone') and water. A better method was invented by Alfa Hannaford in 1915 which agitated the wheat in a solution of formalin (formaldehyde).

Talking Machines: reviving Riverina rural technology collections with video testimonies, captures the histories and stories of generations of Australian men and women who farmed the Riverina, through the rusted metal frames and once sharp blades of dormant farm machinery they used.

The project creates a series of thematic trails across the Riverina and key objects have been selected to support the development of these themes which in turn speak to Australia's role in the industrial revolution- this is the focus of an educational resource. Australia's role in the industrial revolution and the impact of the revolution is little documented in Australian education resources- these films provide an access point for teachers on examples of the impact of the revolution upon rural Australian society. It should be noted that the full impact in Australian society occurred after the curriculum notes on the European based experience- thus date relating to the manufacture and use of some equipment may not align with those published in the curriculum.

## Discussion Pointers:

- Did some pests have a positive outcome (e.g. developing local industry, refrigeration, canning etc?)
- Did all solutions to the pest problems have positive outcomes?
- There was an economic imperative for family run farms to solve these issues; what was their response to pests?
- What significant point in time does this represent? How has our response to the challenge changed over time?

## Suggested Classroom Activities:

- Research and develop a glossary of terms relating to this film- include Fungicide, Bluestone, Copper Sulphate, Pickling, Baffles... What is a Bushel of Wheat?
- Have a class debate – chemicals: friend or foe?
- Undertake a site visit to the museum.
- Interview people who know of the history and perils of grain farming – grandparents or older members of the community.
- Research other pests and the responses to them e.g. Prickly Pear.

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## More Information, Contact Details & Arrangements for Visits

The Wyalong Museum is located at 69 Neeld St (cnr Neeld & Slee Sts) in Wyalong and is open daily from 2pm – 5pm or at other times by appointment.

Contact with the Museum can be made by phoning (02) 6972 3303 or by emailing [stanford@internode.on.net](mailto:stanford@internode.on.net).

More information on the Wyalong Courthouse Museum can be obtained at: <http://www.wyalongmuseum.com.au/> or <http://blandshire.nsw.gov.au/about-blandshire/visiting-shire/museums>.