

TALKING MACHINES

Talking Machines Education Resource

Theme: People

Film Title- Mallee Roller (Weethalle)

About the Clip:

Synopsis:

Bill Browne is a farmer and donor of 'The Bill Browne Vintage Machinery Collection', to the Weethalle Museum. Long after other farmers had given up their horses for tractors... In this clip, Bill talks about clearing the land with the community built Mallee Roller (built in 1925) – a great demonstration of Australian farming ingenuity, the impact of Australians on the landscape and change and continuity in rural areas.

Duration: 4.03 minutes

Study Module:

Curriculum Focus: History – NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

Year: 9 and 10 (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 emergence and nature of significant **economic**, social and political ideas in the period, including nationalism (**ACOKFH019**)
- The experiences of men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution, and their changing way of life (**ACDSEH081**)

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- The short and long-term impacts of the Industrial Revolution, including global changes in landscapes, transport and communication **(ACDSEH082)**
- Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900) **(ACDSEH090)**

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)**

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
- **Ethical Understanding**
 - Explore rights and responsibilities
 - Consider points of view
- **Intercultural Understanding**
 - Investigate culture and cultural identity
 - Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices

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Context/ Background Information:

Bill Browne is a farmer and donor of 'The Bill Browne Vintage Machinery Collection', to the Weethalle Museum. Long after other farmers had given up their horses for tractors, Bill continued using huge teams of up to 14 horses to pull his farm machinery. Bill changed the landscape by clearing the land the land with horses and he persisted in farming with horses into the age of technology.

Mallee country consisting of stunted eucalyptus trees with very long roots was difficult and expensive to clear by hand for wheat cultivation. Charles Mullen of Wasleys, South Australia, devised a method of clearing the Mallee consisting of smashing it down with a heavy roller. The Mallee country around Weethalle was cleared with home-made Mallee rollers like this one. It is made from an old boiler and has a framework of tree trunks.

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:

- Bill persisted in the use of horses when others had made the transition to tractors. Why do you think Bill didn't change for so long? (loved his horses)
- What is Mallee?
- What changes did Bill's farming practices make to the environment? (mallee rolling, dam sinking, 2/3 of crops were grown for horses, equipment for chaff cutting, huge infrastructure just to feed the horses)
- Mallee rollers solved the problem of clearing marginal land but created environmental problems of their own (soil erosion, etc). Discuss.
- Environment/place can be an important element of identity. Is this the case with the person in the video? Explain the reasons for your response.

Suggested Classroom Activities:

- Take a site visit to the museum.
- Site visit to the Weethalle Rodeo (April/ May annually).
- Have a class debate: horse drawn vehicles – romance vs. practicality; clearing the land: environmental vs economic.

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More Information, Contact Details & Arrangements for Visits

The Weethalle Whistestop Museum is located at the Railway Station in Weethalle and is open daily from 10am – 4pm (subject to volunteer availability) or at other times by appointment.

Contact with the Museum can be made by phoning (02) 6975 6199 or by emailing p.bluel@bigpond.com.

More information on the Weethalle Whistlestop Museum can be obtained at: <http://blandshire.nsw.gov.au/about-bland-shire/visiting-shire/museums> or <https://mgns.w.org.au/organisations/weethalle-whistle-stop-arts-and-crafts-and-museum>.