



Citizen historians produce first National CV for Britain

Fury at poor history curriculum in schools inspires world's first CV of a country - a rigorous 'research engine' to inspire youngsters to find out what's great about Britain

History group selects 2012 anniversaries that tell the island story

A group of citizen historians have come together to produce the first-ever National CV of Britain. Dismayed at what they see as a lack of commitment to the teaching of British History in state schools and a lacklustre syllabus, they are campaigning for the nation's history to be taught with verve in its entire sweep - from megalithic Stonehenge to internet modernity and from miners to monarchs.

The National CV is a 25-page document that distils the history of Britain in an entirely new and upbeat way. Britain's narrative is presented in the form of a personal CV - so that's *Name: Britain, Age: 8,000 years an island*, and so on. Older material is at the bottom of the document (e.g. Britain as Tin Island in the Bronze Age), while newer material is at the top (e.g. the invention of the World Wide Web). Each new national achievement can be inserted as a headline, to what is a living, forward-looking document.

The National CV Group claim that Britain has made the most disproportionate contribution to civilisation of anywhere on Earth, whilst having under 1% of the world's people at any one time. Britain launched the modern world (e.g. science, industry, the Age of Reason) and has made many other contributions (e.g. jet engine, antibiotics, structure of DNA, the English language). In the group's terminology the British are *The Influential Islanders* using the CV to '*apply for the future*'

The team has worked with a dozen schools to turn the CV into a one-hour presentation, which hurtles through the island story at a rate of more than a century a minute. Young audiences are energised to become influential islanders in their turn by achieving mastery in their field of interest, through working hard and by displaying character, discipline and flair.

The group now wish to take the CV global in time for the Jubilee celebrations and Olympics, to show the people of Britain and the world why Britain can be proud of its heritage and excited by its future. The group are

looking for sponsorship to roll The National CV out to schools and to the nation at large.

John Hart, who lives in Hampshire and has written on British history, brought the team together: “In this Jubilee & Olympics year the international spotlight will be upon us and we will need the utmost in self-belief. Self-deprecation and false modesty should be sent down a figurative flush toilet - the real thing was invented here of course, in the reign of Elizabeth I - in favour of inspiration and a more buoyant sense of belonging, which is our modern take on patriotism.”

Dr Hart adds: “Britain has an extraordinary record of pioneering accomplishment across the sciences, technology, literature, the arts and any number of other fields of endeavour. How many people know that Alcuin of York came up with the rules for writing sentences and paragraphs that are still used today worldwide? That was in AD 789. We were the key nation in the development of the modern world, bar none: one thinks of the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution, the second agricultural revolution, the beginning here of the Age of Reason, as well as constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. We discovered all of the three main subatomic particles (i.e. proton, neutron, electron) and a quarter of the elements of the periodic table - including the most abundant element in the universe, hydrogen, and life-giving oxygen - while also splitting the first atom, naming the Big Bang, and postulating antimatter, which has been found, and the Higgs boson, which may or may not have been found. We decoded 31% of the human genome. We produced the first meteorological classifications of the clouds and wind. One thinks of Newton, Darwin, Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Dickens, and the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Robin Hood and 007, pausing along the way to contemplate our invention of the elastic band, the fire extinguisher and the lifeboat.”

Potential sponsors and collaborators are invited to approach The National CV Group direct.

The group have identified anniversaries in 2012 that tell the nation’s story:

2012 Anniversaries that tell the island story

60 years ago: Queen Elizabeth II (b1926) ascends the throne in 1952; Britain has the greatest tradition of queens regnant in the world and the greatest tradition of monarchy; Winston Churchill is prime minister; he had led Britain through its - and the world’s - greatest trial in the modern era, the Second World War

100 years ago: stainless steel is invented by Henry Brearley in 1912, when he added chromium to reduce staining and corrosion;

death of Scott of the Antarctic - Britain has the greatest history of exploration and discovery of any nation; birth of Alan Turing (1912-54), the father of computer science and artificial intelligence; his work helped Britain develop the world's first functional electronic computer in 1943, for wartime code breaking

200 years ago: the first commercial use of steam railway locomotives is by Mathew Murray & John Blenkinsop at a colliery in 1812

300 years ago: Thomas Newcomen improves the steam engine, 1712; in the same year John Arbuthnot invents a national personification, bluff country squire John Bull, who came to feature a Union Jack waistcoat

350 years ago: sparkling wine is invented by Christopher Merret in 1662 (Dom Perignon's own activities in this line in France, date to 1668 at the earliest)

400 years ago: four centuries before the coming of the London 2012 Olympics the Cotswold Olympicks is started in 1612 by Robert Dover; the first modern games was held at Much Wenlock, Shropshire in 1850; it was organised by Dr William Penny Brookes (1809-95), founding grandfather of the modern Olympic Games and inspirer of Baron de Coubertin, the father of the Olympic Games, who put on the Athens Olympiad of 1896

500 years ago: the world's first modern navy is founded by Henry VIII, where his warships are dedicated gun platforms rather than conveyances for armies to have battles afloat; Henry uses his new navy in 1512 to beat the French at the Battle of Brest

1000 years ago: Archbishop of Canterbury St Alphege (954-1012) is murdered by Vikings

[ENDS]

Notes for Editors

More on The National CV of Britain

The National CV is a history of Britain told as if Britain were a person. 'CV' stands for Curriculum Vitae, Latin for *course of life*. A CV is someone's personal history told in brief, with a future orientation. A CV is written in reverse order, with the most recent information at the top. Items on The National CV are validated in an online database called The National CVpedia of Britain (www.thenationalcv.org.uk). The National CV is available in sample form only on the website. A full upload awaits project sponsorship.

The advantage of the CV format, the group point out, is that it is forward-looking history. In the context of job-getting, a CV says, "Here is what I have done in the past, here is what I can do for you in the future". In tough times, even assembling a CV can be invigorating: "I have done a few things, haven't I?"

More on The National CV Group

The National CV Group first met in January 2009. A group of five concerned citizens, they were shocked by the amnesia into which Britain had sunk in regard to what the group saw as their nation's wildly disproportionate positive contribution to civilization, given that Britons have typically represented less than 1% of the world's population at any given time. Particularly exasperating, the group felt, was the feebleness of history teaching in schools.

The five-person core group now have an additional network of two dozen consulting experts in a wide variety of fields, to achieve the utmost in rigour. The standard to which the group operates is 'true and defensible'.

The National CV Group acts in the spirit of Victorian voluntarists, to combat what they call 'thought poverty'. Between them, the five originators have seven academic degrees, have published ten books and many articles, have run and are running businesses, have put on exhibitions and conferences, engaged in projects in many fields and have lectured widely.

The core team see themselves as 'citizen historians' or the 'people's historians' because they can tell the island story straightforwardly and robustly, in upbeat overview, uninhibited by career or other braking considerations. Each has a professional scene of their own, outside their preoccupation with remotivating Britain at a difficult time in its history.

The original Mission Statement of The National CV Group was as follows:

"We are distilling Britain's history by compiling a CV for the nation to encourage a buoyant sense of belonging and to inspire the Influential Islanders as they 'apply for the future'."

The National CV now exists and has so far been prototyped with success as the basis of a schools presentation in twelve schools, to hundreds of children in the age range 9-14. Sponsorship is sought for The National CV Schools History Project, for a national roll-out to state schools.

Also sought is a Media Partner to publish and publicise the The National CV Document. This is The National CV Media Project.

Discussions are in progress with potential exhibition partners, as The National CV could be the cost-effective basis for the long-mooted Museum of British History. This is The National CV Exhibition Project.

In January 2012 the group comprises in total about 30 historically minded individuals from business, science, authorship, the arts and academe.

The National CV, a Project Brief and a Schools' Feedback document are available for review by potential partners.

More on John Hart

John Hart was born in Bedford in 1953. He is a scientist, a businessman in the technology sector and a writer on technical and other matters. With his wife and two daughters he lives in northwest Hampshire, in Tadley - the subject of the world's first Local CV.

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