



28 Shap Sub-Group Activities and Members

Shap Sub-Groups

Part of the creative ethos of Shap was the meeting of groups of members (with some other non-members invited) to produce materials on specific topics. In some cases these led to separate publications, in others to a ferment of ideas that were reported back to Shap's biennial meetings.

Apart from the three most active groups described below, these subsequently included a primary age range group led by Vida Barnett and based in the north west; editorial groups in support of editors of the Journal (mostly female); groups of contributors to the Shap Calendars, partly based at Borough Road, then at Cherry Gould's home, and subsequently online (chiefly male); groups appointed to allocate the Shap Awards (female); and occasional meetings of elected officers (mostly male).

A 1972 'Report of the Shap Working Party' (in *World Religions: Aids for Teachers*. CRC 1972 pp 112-115 and 1973 115-117) states that 'The first aim of the SWP is to produce syllabuses for the various age ranges, along with suitable syllabus material that can be used in the school situation. To this end sub-groups have been established, and further details of these can be obtained from the following:

Infant:	Mrs E Wilson Huddersfield
Junior:	Miss J Holm Cambridge
Lower Secondary:	Mr D G Butler, and 1973 Mr A J Finel Kingston upon Hull Members included Mr D Butler, W Owen Cole, Robin Davies and John Finel
Upper Secondary/Sixth Form:	Rev T Shannon London E 17 Members included Ron Jones, Joan Tooke, Patrick Miller, Terry Carter , Brian Gates, Ray Trudgian, Trevor Shannon and Peter Woodward'

Fuller reports then follow on three of these sub-groups' activities (CRC 1972 pp 113-115 and 1973 116-117):

Shap Infant Sub-group:	Mrs Elizabeth Wilson Huddersfield
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Shap working party on World Religions in Education



Small group meetings have been held in the home, when Muslims have explained their reactions to school religious education, and further such meetings are planned.

The Child Education Group in Huddersfield, prompted by the community relations council there, invited Mr W Owen Cole to speak on modern trends in religious education in the infant school, which of course includes thematic material and creative attitudes towards children of varying faiths. This meeting was well attended and is leading to further contacts with local schoolteachers with multi-racial elements in the classroom, from which an extension of sub-group membership to interested teachers and headmistresses is likely.

The secretary has produced a number of relevant articles, including the CEM paper for teachers, World Religions in the Primary School, an article for Child Education, Autumn 1970, entitled World Religions in the Infant School, and a description in Learning for Living, January 1971, of A Multi-Racial Infant School. Plans are also in hand for a visit to India and Pakistan this autumn. CRC P 113

Shap Northern sub-group – initially Lower Secondary

Together the group has addressed itself to the following areas:

- a) Discussion about the proper content of middle school world religions syllabuses, including recommendations of year stages in which teaching on this topic is appropriate, consideration of the possible allocation of time in a school timetable, and an outline of major areas to be covered.
- b) The establishment of certain basic principles of teaching method for this age range...looking at the advantages and disadvantages of a) thematic background topic b) c) 'straight' d) comparative approaches to the subject in the secondary school. The question of the immigrant versus the 'pure-science' approach and of whether teaching should be historical or interpretative were also examined.
- c) Research into and discussion of the practical possibilities of integration between world religions courses and those in other subjects.
- d) The topical consideration of various current problems as they arise.
- e) The provision of approved schemes of work by discussion of these prior to Shap conferences in an attempt to bring out the practical implications of eg teaching on Islam and on Buddhism at middle school level.
- f) The construction of aids for the teacher, eg Robin Davies' paper on taking a class of lower-secondary children to a synagogue, and the context of such visits.
- g) Research into the world religions content of CSE syllabuses – paper by John Finel of January 1971.
- h) Co-operation with local authorities (eg Bradford) in the revision of agreed syllabuses-



One further venture from the early 1970s may be noted. This focused on the then new CSE examination, prompted by the raising of the school leaving age to 16 and need to provide opportunities for those who would not be entered for 'O' level GCE exams. This new exam offered opportunity for new thinking. Shap convened a working group of 16 people – 10 from secondary schools and 6 from colleges of education to prepare a syllabus on world religions. Syllabuses for Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and (interestingly) 'Christianity as a world religion' were proposed. Owen Cole's introduction indicated the tone of the syllabus: *In our planning we have, in every case, attempted to present the faith as a living reality so that, for example, the pupil may understand what it means to be a Jew in terms of practice and belief. We have begun with the concrete, the tangible and visible, and **probed towards the abstract and conceptual***. [My highlighting] Clearly Shap was from its beginnings concerned with more than an attenuated phenomenology. The syllabus provides a good example of Shap's collaborative working – here with schools and colleges and in service to exam boards. Other joint ventures involved SOAS, the World Congress of Faiths and SCIFDE (the Standing Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Education) – yes, interfaith dialogue in education was on the agenda for some over 30 years ago.'

Quoted from Mary Hayward's History of Shap – see item 17 above.

Shap Southern Sub-group – initially Upper Secondary

The work of the sub-group falls into four sections:

- a) A three-tier syllabus on Hinduism for use in sixth forms has been initiated by Peter Woodward and discussed by the group. It includes a) a basic course for elementary study; b) a general course for abler students, biographical, historical, analytic; c) an advanced course for more specialised study, literary, sociological and doctrinal. The aim is to provide a flexible guide for the sixth form teacher that will assist him in the selection of material suitable for instruction and discussion with his students. The end product envisaged is a book of which only one part will be the development of the above syllabus. On the basis that the final product will prove economically more attractive if it deals with two or three religions, a similar but modified pattern will be repeated for Buddhism, Islam, and possibly other faiths, using where appropriate, a thematic approach.
- b) Ron Jones has developed a thematic treatment of 'anxiety'. Using an interdisciplinary approach involving music, literature, art, etc, he has suggested that anxiety is seen to be at the core of human existence. Once the problem has been explored, the differing 'answers' of the religions of the world can then be studied. A start has been made on those suggested in Buddhist teaching.

The Shap working party on World Religions in Education



- c) Joan Tooke and Trevor Shannon are working on the various attitudes found in world religions to the subject of war and peace. Progress is steady and it is hoped that this will eventually lead to publication.
- d) Ron Jones produced a stimulating paper on the philosophical implications of teaching world religions. This gave rise to discussion of the nature of symbolism in religious language and the need for treatment in depth of religious concepts before attempting to deal with world faiths in the classroom.
- e) A sub-group consisting of Patrick Miller, Terry Carter, Brian Gates, Ray Trudgian and Peter Woodward has met to prepare the ground for the work of the sub-group on Islam following the third Shap conference. To date this group has reviewed the filmstrips on Islam already available and listed the possible contents of a sixth form syllabus on Islamic themes.

'World Religions - Aids for Teachers and the first Handbooks offer a further example of a collaborative venture. Shap gathered and invited material for these, but was greatly helped by their publication by CRC (the Community Relations Commission, later CRE). *World Religions: Aids for Teachers* edited by Peter Woodward was published in 1972; this included a calendar of religious festivals; lists of AVA, and 'Tools for the Classroom'; its bibliographies were central and inclusive – here already was guidance, for example, for those who wished to know about Jainism, Chinese and Japanese religions, Zoroastrianism and Humanism; about Christian attitudes to non-Christian religions and books for the classroom. 'Tools for the Classroom' included suggestions for 'a Jewish Box' and guidance on visiting a synagogue with lower secondary pupils. 'World religions in the infant school' was also addressed.' Two articles relating to 'Teaching about Islam at Sixth Form level' produced by the Upper Secondary sub-group were also included here (1972 pp 135-138).

Quoted from Mary Hayward's History of Shap – see item 17 above.