

Susan Fitch

Escape

1994

Installation on Bluecoat railings



This one-day installation on Bluecoat's front courtyard railings marked a day in the school's history:

"Friday 25th of July 1800, being the fair day, the boys were so determined upon a holiday, that they drew the staple off one of the gates and went out, to the number of 107. Several of the boys did not return immediately from the fair. It is noted that seven boys ran away from the school and one of them threw a brick into a mug shop."

Instead of being punished for their escape, the school decided to use money raised in the chapel, and by the sale of goods, to buy the children "balls, tops, marbles and other indulgences, at the discretion of the master, save and except that the said fund shall first be liable to defray and expense incurred by children breaking the windows."

Fitch repeated her installation on the railings on the same day in subsequent years.

THINK ABOUT

- Do you think you would have liked being a Blue Coat School pupil? Are you glad you're at school now?

TALK ABOUT

- What are the differences in the education of children who attended Blue Coat School in the 18th century and your education now?

- What are the differences in the lives of children who attended the school in the 18th century and your life now?

- Why do you think the children ran away to the fair?

- Do you like this artwork?

- What does it, and the text, tell you about the lives of pupils at the school?

- At the time when the school was founded, it was not a legal requirement for children to go to school. How does this make you feel?

- Does every child have the right to an education?

FIND OUT ABOUT

- What life was like for children at this time.

- What life was like for poor people at this time?

Activity

Using the templates provided, make two paper shirts. Depending on the skill level or age of the class, you can either use the origami jacket or the cut-out template.

Decorate one shirt with images and words that relate to the life of a child at Blue Coat School in the 18th century, and decorate the second shirt with images and words that relate to the life of a child at school today.

You could think about:

- What opportunities were available to the children then, compared with now?

- What did children do for fun then, compared with now?

- Did all children have the chance to go to school?

Words you could use: opportunity, exciting, lonely, learning, community, hard, dangerous, fun, adventure, scary, friends.

