

## Visit the 100 year old Paragon Café in Katoomba 1916-2016

Meet the outcomes, cover the skills and content of the NSW K-6 History syllabus for students in Stage 2 through a site visit to this famous historic café. Established in 1916, by the Greek Simos family the café will celebrate its centenary in 2016. It was listed on the State Heritage Register in 2015. Read Professor Ian Jack's remarkable story about the café, beginning with 19 year old Zacharias Simos from the island of Kythera in Greece to the current owner, Robyn Parker, who has loved the café since her childhood.

Visit Ian's story at:

<http://www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au/imagesDB/wysiwyg/BMHJournal5Jan2015.pdf>

The following web sites add further information, interesting details, events, photographs and insights into the story of the intrepid, adventurous and entrepreneurial young man, Zac Simos.

<http://theparagonhistory.com.au/>

<http://www.kythera-family.net/index.php?nav=117-119&cid=225-221&did=2886>

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simos-zacharias-theodore-jack-13195>

<http://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/the-paragon-at-katoomba-by-george-repin.php>

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-great-grecian-earn-how-immigrants-made-a-cafe-society-20091208-khqp.html>

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5051727>

<http://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/3024974/heritage-recognition-for-paragon-cafe/>

<http://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/1438202/chocolate-secrets-uncovered-at-paragon-cafe/>

[http://www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au/imagesDB/wysiwyg/Heritagenletter25Jan-Feb2013\\_2.pdf](http://www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au/imagesDB/wysiwyg/Heritagenletter25Jan-Feb2013_2.pdf)

### Location and contact details

65 Katoomba Street, Katoomba, New South Wales 2780, Australia

61 2 4782 2928

<https://www.facebook.com/TheParagonCafe/>

View Google images of the Paragon Café Katoomba to set the scene!

## Stage 2

### Community and Remembrance

This topic provides a study of identity and diversity in both a local and broader context. Moving from the heritage of their local area, students explore the historical features and diversity of their community. They examine local, state and national symbols and emblems of significance and celebrations and commemorations, both locally and in other places around the world.

#### Outcomes

- Describes and explains how significant individuals, groups and events contributed to changes in the local community over time HT2-2
- Applies skills of historical inquiry and communication HT2-5

#### Key Inquiry question

- What is the nature of the contribution made by different groups and individuals in the community?
- How and why do people choose to remember significant events of the past?
- How has the community changed? What features have been lost and what features have been retained?

#### Content

ONE important example of change and ONE important example of continuity over time in the local community, region or state/territory (ACHHK061)

Students using a range of sources, describe and explain how and why ONE area e.g. transport, work, education, entertainment and daily life, has changed or ONE that has remained the same in the local area, region or state/territory since colonial times

Students investigate ONE cultural group and outline their contribution to the community using a range of sources e.g. photographs, newspapers, oral histories, diaries and letters

The role that people of diverse backgrounds have played in the development and character of the local community (ACHHK062)

Students focus on ONE group, investigate their diverse backgrounds, and outline their contribution to the local community using a range of sources

**Reference:** pages 44 and 45 History K-6 NSW BOS

### **At the Paragon Café students will**

- Tour the main rooms of the Paragon Café noting evidence to support what has stayed the same in the café and what has changed over time in the café
- Hear the story of Zacharias Simos the original owner of the café and his journey from Greece to Katoomba
- Interview staff members at the café to determine the kind of jobs and work involved in the café, both now and in the past
- Identify and name the types of entertainment provided by the Paragon Café e.g. concerts, weddings, important dinners, late suppers, afternoon teas, now and in the past
- Describe the service the café provides for the community of Katoomba and beyond-why did people come to the café in the past and why do they come to the café now? What did they do and experience at the café in the past and what can you do and experience now at the café?
- Explain how the Paragon Café is involved in the community of Katoomba today
- Brainstorm to draw conclusions about the way work and entertainment in the café has changed over a century and stayed the same over a century
- Study examples of industrial technology used in the manufacture of the chocolates, bakery and famous soda fountain in the past and compare with production equipment used today
- Complete an Object study matrix on examples of the technology used in the café in the past
- Explain the importance of celebrating and remembering the centenary of the Paragon Café 1916-2016
- View a variety of historical sources located in the café
- Record their impressions of the café in a variety of ways including diagrams, a simple database, comparative charts and photographs

## **An Object Study**

Objects are **primary sources** and provide a window into the past having been produced by people who lived during that period.

Providing opportunities for students to have contact with a variety of objects can develop a sense of what it was like to be alive during a past era.

An object study engages students in a personal way to events of the past and helps make them more real.

When studying an object, students need to be both critical and analytical as they examine the object.

Through discussion, questioning and drawing on prior knowledge student's piece together clues and patterns and form conclusions based on evidence gleaned from the object.

A suggested approach to undertaking an Object Study with Stage 2 students includes the following four focus areas:

- The main things to think about when viewing an object
- Some more questions to ask
- Things found out from viewing an object
- Things I have to find out about through research

### **The main things to think about when viewing an object**

- **Physical features**- what does it look and feel like?
- **Construction**-how was it made?
- **Function**- what was it made for? How was it used?
- **Design**-does it do the job it was made for?
- **Value**- what is it worth?

### **Some more questions to ask (examples only)**

#### **Physical features**

- What shape and size is it?
- What colour is it? How is it decorated?
- Is it made of something natural or produced in a factory?
- Is it a complete object?
- Has it been changed or mended?
- Is it old or new?
- Is it in good condition? Is it worn, chipped or broken?

#### **Construction (examples only)**

- Is it handmade or made by a machine?
- Has it been stuck together?
- Was it made in pieces or in one piece in a mould?

#### **Function (examples only)**

- How has the object been used?
- Has the use changed?
- Has a new use for the object been invented?

### **Design (examples only)**

- Is it an easy object to pick up and hold?
- Is it heavy or light? Is it a tall or short object?
- Is it easy to work?
- Is it decorated? If it is decorated how does that help the design?
- What could be changed or improved?

### **Value (examples only)**

- Who would have made this object and what would it mean to them?
- Who would have purchased this object? Why would they have chosen this object? Do you think it has meant a lot to the owner? How do you know if the owner has cared for the object?
- What do you think this object means to the owner of the Paragon Café?
- Is it easy to get another one of the objects and replace it? Why is it hard to buy more of this object?

### **Things found out from viewing an object**

Students record their observations and knowledge

### **Things I have to find out about to research**

Students will determine what they would like to know more about after completing their object study

## **Object Study in the Paragon Café**

Students will have the opportunity for a 'hands on study' of a variety of objects during their excursion time in the café. Up to ten objects will be set out on tables in the Blue Room; students will work either individually or in pairs to study up to three objects in the allocated time.

Taking photographs of the objects and working together using the Jigsaw strategy back at school, the students can share their observations and conclusions about all of the objects on display.

A recording sheet set out as a grid will be provided for the students for this activity at the café.

It would be beneficial if students are familiar with how to study an object prior to the excursion, maximising this learning opportunity in the café. Students may wish to develop their own set of investigative questions to guide their study of an object or may use the example questions listed.

## Getting ready for the excursion to the Paragon Café

### A suggested Teaching and Learning sequence

#### Teachers' note

1. Prepare students for the excursion by providing opportunities for them to learn how to discuss and describe an object of significance chosen by the teacher using the suggested areas- Physical appearance, Construction, Function, Design and Value.
2. Tell students they will be visiting the Blue Mountains town of Katoomba and the 100 year old Paragon Café. They will be investigating the café to see what they think could be the same as it was when established in 1916 and what they think probably has changed a lot over the last 100 years. The areas of change and continuity they'll be focussing on will be work and entertainment. They are also visiting the café to evaluate the necessity of remembering and celebrating a place like the Paragon café.
3. Establish student knowledge of the location of the Blue Mountains and Katoomba; after viewing digital and paper maps describe the location in terms of their school- using directional and positional language. Work out the route they will take either by bus, train or walking to get to the location of the café. Mark it out on maps and calculate distances and ETA's. Discuss how people would have travelled to the café in 1916 and over the time since then. Google images of the Blue Mountains and Katoomba and discuss observations of the built and natural landscape.
4. Establish student knowledge and experience of cafes in general, then specifically the Paragon Café. Ask students if anyone in their family has ever been to the Paragon café, including grandparents and great grandparents. Students describe their experience or knowledge, if applicable and bring in supporting information including photographs, any souvenirs, stories etc for sharing.
5. Google images of both the interior and exterior of the Paragon Café for student discussion. How is the café different from cafes they go to?
6. The café was established by Zacharias Simos a Greek migrant from the island of Kythera. Knowledge of Greek migration to Australia from 1900 and an introduction to the story of the owner of the Paragon Café, Zacharias Simos would enrich the students' visit to the café, assisting their understanding of the importance of the Greek community and their contribution through their cafes in the local and wider community, including

NSW and Australia. Locate Greece and Australia on a world map and discuss how people leaving Greece and moving to Australia would have travelled and think about the routes that would have been taken. Consider why people left Greece and what they did when they arrived in Australia.

7. How did Zacharias Simos get to Katoomba from the Greek island of Kythera?

The following sites have useful sections which would be best accessed by both teacher and students working together or in small research groups, locating key information about Greek migration and Zac Simos' story. Create an overview of his journey through recounting his story in an historical narrative.

<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/factsheets/56.html>

<http://www.kythera-family.net/download/Aphrodite%20courier%20mail.pdf>

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simos-zacharias-theodore-jack-13195>

<http://www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au/imagesDB/wysiwyg/BMHJournal5Jan2015.pdf>

## At the Paragon Café

On arrival in Katoomba Street, Katoomba, take time to have a look at the outside of the café. The best vantage spot is on the footpath opposite the café, outside Macarthur's Antique centre.

Students describe what they see in terms of age, style, colours and anything else that stands out for them. Note the buildings around the Paragon Café, beside it and up and down the street.

Cross the road at the nearby pedestrian crossing to the front of the café, and make your way safely to the Paragon café. Volunteer members of the Friends of the Paragon will be waiting to greet you at the front door and will escort you through the main dining area of the café to the Blue Room.

Robyn Parker, the owner of the café will welcome you to the café and then students will be set to work investigating this wonderful site.

**Prior to arrival please organise students into two groups:**

**Group A** will be taken on a tour of the café (depending on student numbers and numbers of volunteers, this group may be made into smaller groups for easier exploration of the café)

**Group B** will work on the Object Study set up in the Blue Room. Friends of the Paragon volunteers will be able to assist students with their object study if necessary. Students will be encouraged to photograph the object they are studying to assist with either an oral or written description back at school.

After a nominated time, the tour group will come back to the Blue Room and swap over with the Object study group.

The tour of the Paragon café will include close viewing of the

- **Front of the building, including the awning** over the footpath. Students will be encouraged to identify features that give clues to the café being an old building e.g. brass window frames, the door, shop front windows, writing, curtains, overall style of the building and materials used to construct the building
- **Main dining room**- features that stand out; students will be directed to observe the display cabinets, carpets, light fittings, photograph of Mrs Simos, the booths, glass mirrors, Greek classical friezes, signage, packaging
- **Upstairs area** including the chocolate room, the bake house and viewing some of the industrial kitchen equipment used
- **Banquet Hall**- stunning art deco mirror work and fancy designs and patterns, the furniture
- **Blue Room**-light fittings and areas that need restoration

Throughout the tour, students will be encouraged to describe what they see, feel, hear, smell, are liking, finding interesting and identify what they think is old, new, what the rooms have been used for, what things were made from, how it has changed or stayed the same, what needs fixing, etc. ask questions and take photos. Students may draw simple mud maps of each room visited noting what the room is and how it was and is used. Short film clips could be made if students bring and use iPads.

Once all students have completed the tour and the object study assemble in the Banquet Hall

- To interview staff members about the kinds of jobs they do now and the kinds of jobs they would have had to do in the past. Some jobs will still be the same since the beginning of the café in 1916 but are most likely done in different ways now. Record on a "then and now" sheet
- Robyn the owner of the café will talk about the kind of entertainment that has been part of the tradition of the café since 1916 and will give examples of what happens in the café now
- For a quick brainstorm and discussion by students as to why it's important to remember this café and celebrate it being 100 years old
- Record ideas, in pairs or small groups, for celebrating the 100 years of the Paragon Café and share!

### Winding up the visit

- A light luncheon option will be available and will be served in the Blue Room for those schools who have booked in for this; this will be set up during the discussion session in the Banquet Hall
- Purchasing gelato or drinks can be organised
- Opportunities for some shopping for a treat or to take something special home for the family can be organised if students are allowed to bring along a set amount of spending money. Students may wish to purchase a small box of chocolates, a Waratah Bar or one of the many tempting reproduction vintage toys that were popular with children in the 1920s and 1930s
- Bringing own lunches and eating them in the Blue Room can be arranged

### Home from the Paragon Café and back at school!

#### Some suggestions:

- Complete the object study matrix and any further investigation needed; share and discuss the "then" and "now " aspect of the technology used in the café
- Construct a timeline of the Greek community arriving in Australia and a Greek family coming to Katoomba to establish the Paragon Café. Extend the timeline to include the current owner and the continuation of the purpose of the café.
- Construct consequence charts to demonstrate the effect of the Paragon Café on the community of Katoomba, especially through the stems of employment (work), entertainment and as a service for the people of Katoomba and beyond.
- Concluding activity -round table discussion  
Revisit notes, photographs, impressions and points from the discussion time in the Banquet Hall and draw things together to answer the initial investigative focus:  
How has **work** and **entertainment** in the café changed over time and remained the same over time?  
How has the work of Zac Simos in establishing and maintaining his renowned Greek café contributed to Katoomba and beyond, both in the past and now?  
Why is it important to remember and celebrate the centenary of the Paragon Café?  
Record, share and display responses in a variety of ways
- Send some feedback to the Paragon Café. We would love to display and share your time in the café!

## Stage 3

### Australia as a Nation

#### Outcomes

- Identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society HT3-3
- Applies a variety of skills of historical inquiry and communication HT3-5

#### Key Inquiry questions

- Who were the people who came to Australia? Why did they come?
- What contribution have significant individuals and groups made to the development of Australian society?

#### Content

Students use sources such as oral history to research stories of migration to Australia explaining reasons for migration

Students explain how migrants have contributed to Australian society

**Reference:** pages 54 and 55 History K-6 NSW BOS

#### Students will

- Visit the *Greek café* established in 1916 by Zacharias Simos in Katoomba
- View and discuss historical sources, including photographs and objects, to create a profile of the Simos family including reasons for coming to Australia
- Hear the story of Zacharias Simos, the original owner of the café and his journey from Greece to Katoomba
- Pose questions to deepen their understanding of Zacharias Simos migration story
- Construct a simple time line to show significant times in the journey of the café
- Identify evidence of the Simos family's influence in the café and building today through exploring the main areas of the café and exterior of the building
- View and discuss the classical Greek alabaster friezes created by the Danish sculptor, Otto Steen and his contribution to the café
- Gather evidence to explain how the Greek family and owners of the renowned Paragon Café contributed to the local and wider society

**Before visiting the café find out about**

- The story of Greek migration to Australia
- The development of Greek cafes across Australia

The following websites focus on migration and Greek cafes

<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/factsheets/56.html>

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/origins/history.aspx?pid=23>

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/greek-cafes-in-regional-australia/5646272>

<http://www.insidehistory.com.au/2014/04/dream-merchants-australias-greek-cafes-2/>

[http://amusine.typepad.com/the\\_last\\_hurrah/australias-greek-cafe-revealing-athena.html](http://amusine.typepad.com/the_last_hurrah/australias-greek-cafe-revealing-athena.html)

<http://www.goc.com.au/index.php/en/home/news/73-australia-s-greek-cafes>