

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 3 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

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 3

Australia as a Nation

This topic is about our country's development, particularly after 1901. Students learn about the way of life of people who migrated to Australia and their contributions to Australia's economic and social development.

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

Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia (including from ONE Asian country) and the reasons they migrated, such as World War 11 and Australian migration programs since the war (ACHHK115)

The contribution of individuals and groups, including Aboriginal people and /or Torres Strait Islanders and migrants, to the development of Australian society, for example in areas such as the economy, education, sciences, the arts, sport (ACHHK116)

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

At the Paragon Café 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, including why he left Greece
- Construct a simple time line to show significant times in the journey of the café

- Construct mud maps of the main rooms, name and label with distinguishing features
- 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'
- Identify and study examples of art deco architecture and decorative features
- Gather evidence to explain how the Greek family and owners of the renowned Paragon Café contributed to the local and wider society

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.

Stage 3 students will also view historical documents.

Getting ready for the excursion to the Paragon Café

Suggested Teaching and Learning sequence

Teachers' notes

1. Discuss café experiences and determine reasons for visiting cafes-why, who, what and when. Write the term NSW State Heritage Register on a board and brainstorm with students what this could mean for a site or building. Inform students there is a café in Katoomba that has been put on this list and it is called the Paragon Café. Brainstorm and discuss with students possible reasons for the café being included on the State Heritage Register. Tell students they are going to visit the Paragon Cafe in Katoomba to investigate its history and explore this iconic, renowned site.
2. Discuss what they think they might see at the café and what it could be like. Google images of the Paragon Café and show students images of the interior and exterior of the Paragon Café in Katoomba, Discuss impressions. Ask students if anyone in their family has ever been to this café, including grandparents and great grandparents. Share experiences, photographs, souvenirs, stories etc if applicable.
3. Use digital and paper maps to locate the position of the café both in Katoomba and in the Blue Mountains. Describe the location using positional and directional language to accurately pinpoint where the café is, including co-ordinates and latitude and longitude.
4. Explain to the students that this café was established in 1916 by a Greek man, aged 19; a migrant from the Greek island of Kythera and his name was Zacharais Simos (later known as Jack Simos).
5. Students construct a set of investigative questions to guide their research into finding out about the Greek Simos family in Katoomba; as well as a general overview of Greek migration to Australia from 1870. Students can

access a wide range of sources to put the pieces together of this group's migration story and a specific study of the Simos family.

Professor Ian Jack's abstract covering the establishment of the Paragon Café in Katoomba as well as information about other business established by Greek migrants is an excellent source. The following websites provide relevant information and would be suitable for group and individual research work.

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

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

<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>

Further information could be obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Blue Mountains Historical Society and the Blue Mountains City Council archives

6. Introduce students to the basic concepts of art deco design particularly in architecture, interior decorative features and furnishings and the era this art style flourished.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/homes/design/period_artdeco.shtml#top

<http://www.funkidslive.com/features/building-london-from-tudors-to-the-future/1920s-and-1930s-housesm-and-the-art-deco-movement/>

<http://www.technologystudent.com/prddes1/deco1.html>

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 and historic documents, including the 1978 Women's Weekly article, set up in the Blue Room. Friends of the Paragon volunteers will be able to assist students with their object study and discussion of historic documents if necessary. Students will be encouraged to photograph the object they are studying to assist with either an oral or written description/report 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 guided to understand that Zac and Mary Simos' influence in the café is everywhere- their taste and style to keep the café up to date and state of the art by choosing décor and architectural features that were cutting edge during the 1920s, 30s and 40s; as well as purchasing the best industrial equipment at the time. The expansion of the café through the additional

rooms of the Banquet Hall and the Blue Room will be explained as well as the addition of the bakery and chocolate making room upstairs. (Note-not the transplanting of a Greek village style café from Greece into Katoomba). Students record their experiences of their café tour in a variety of ways including note taking, drawing and labelling simple maps, taking photos and recording short film clips if using i-pads.

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

- Share impressions of the café
- Identify key dates and events in the Simos' migration story observed from the tour
- Share feelings and ideas about the Simos family
- Name possible reasons for the café being put on to the State Heritage Register List
- Share ideas about the contribution of the Simos family to Australian society and culture
- Describe favourite art deco features throughout the cafe

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:

- Google images and information about other Greek cafes in NSW and Australia. Compare and contrast with the Paragon café in Katoomba
- Show the spread of Greek cafes on a map of Australia using a symbol to identify their location
- Analyse the significance of the Greek cafes to the local areas they were established in around Australia and make summative statements about their contribution to the local and wider communities of the time

- Develop a set of arguments supporting the placement of the Paragon Café on the NSW State Heritage register in light of the migration story of the Simos family
- Describe the legacy of Zac and Mary Simos to the Australian community through their café. Role- play an interview with Zac and Mary coming back to their café so long after its establishment in 1916.
- Complete a timeline of significant events and dates of Zac and Mary Simos' story as well as a general timeline for Greek migration.
- Contact members of the local Greek community to visit your school as a guest speaker or members from the following sites
<http://www.ausgreeknet.com/newsouthwales.htm>
<http://www.goc.com.au/index.php/en/>
- Identify and possibly visit other sites established by members of the Greek Australian community e.g. Greek Orthodox church
- Investigate the story of Otto Steen's migration from Denmark to Australia. Investigate examples of his art work in Australia.
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P03477.009>
<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=4YWbbE5KpRIC&pg=PA342&lpg=PA342&dq=information+about+sculptor+otto+steen&source=bl&ots=OyDcDbHZag&sig=Dz7Iq5maZINq4SEoZ00iacaKFic&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi97ObPwZLLAhUBrZQKHZXLAJsQ6AEIQzAI#v=onepage&q=information%20about%20sculptor%20otto%20steen&f=false>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_George_V_Memorial_Hospital
- Research and construct an overview of Danish migration to Australia.
- Create art deco art works based on designs and patterns from the café.
- Concluding activity -round table discussion
 Draw together all information and understandings from research material and visiting the Paragon café about Greek migration to Australia and the story of Zac and Mary Simos' migration story. Explain the contribution of both individuals and the whole group
 Record, share and display explanations of Greek migration to Australia in a variety of ways- a newspaper article, an historic narrative, create a picture book or a big book, a digital presentation, a series of captioned photographs etc
- Send some feedback to the Paragon Café. We would love to display and share your time in the café