**Secret Tunnel Writing**

There is a network of tunnels under the Plantation Garden that have been responsible for some of the subsidence in the local area over the years, including the bus that fell in to a sink-hole on Earlham Road in 1988. This picture even inspired the Double Decker Chocolate bar, with the slogan ‘Nothing fills a hole like a Double Decker!’.

On the wall of one tunnel, the words ‘John Bond, 1571’ has been scratched. No-one really knows what the tunnels were for, or how long they have been there.

They could be used to inspire some creative writing about discovering a secret entrance to the tunnels. Perhaps, like in the Chronicles of Narnia, they lead to another world. It could be a ghost story that the children write, or perhaps a time-travel story, where the character/s emerge to find themselves in an apparently different place – but in fact they have gone back in time, perhaps to 1571.

You may wish to explore some or all of the below with the children prior to them creating their own writing, depending on how much time / how many lessons you wish to devote to the work.

1. Introduce the idea of the tunnels under the Garden to the children. Watch some exerts / read some of the extracts to give children some ideas of how secret tunnels / entrances have been used in other stories.

<http://www.teachertube.com/video/the-legend-of-the-spurlington-tunnel-88127>

(American video – telling story of an abandoned mine. Might be good for ghost stories. The latter part where the girl enters the tunnel is good for description, with the light unable to penetrate far in to the darkness, the sound of dripping water and the echoing of her footsteps and voice.)

<http://www.watchmojo.com/video/id/13055/>

(Top 10 Secret Passages from movies – can view in school. Watch in advance and choose carefully which excerpts you plan to use. Suggestions are:

2:00 – Lord of the Rings – the entrance to Moria, which can only be opened by speaking the right word in the right language in full moonlight and at a specific time.

9:00 – The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe – a secret door to another world that only opens for certain people.

12:23 – Harry Potter – various different ways of opening / entering secret tunnels / places to discuss. Could also look at the written extract about the entrance to Diagon Alley.)

1. Look at / analyse the extract written about a person going to the Garden at night to look for the entrance to a secret tunnel that they have discovered through an old, crumpled map. A good place to start with this might be to give the children some time to note down all of the unanswered questions that the extract gives and discuss the use of these as a hook to interest the reader and to get them to want to read on.
2. Ask the children / discuss how suspense is built up through the extract.
3. Get the children to discuss what effect the coloured sections on the analysed version have on the story / reader.
4. Print off and hand out some of the stories / extracts already uploaded to the website which have been written by other children. Pairs or small groups could each look at an extract and choose something they to share with the class. You could have a particular focus, asking children to find examples of good suspense, adjectives, verb choices, personification etc. or ask more generally for the children to choose and share a part of the extract they thought was effective.
5. Give the children time to discuss their own ideas with each other to plan their writing. Some questions you may want the children to think about:

* Is the character alone or with someone else?
* How do they know about it / find it?
* Does anyone else know where they are, or know about the tunnels?
* How do they get in to the tunnel? Is it something they have to do, or does the entrance open up for them?
* What do they find inside?
* How can you build up mystery and suspense in your extract?
* How can you leave your extract on a cliff-hanger?

