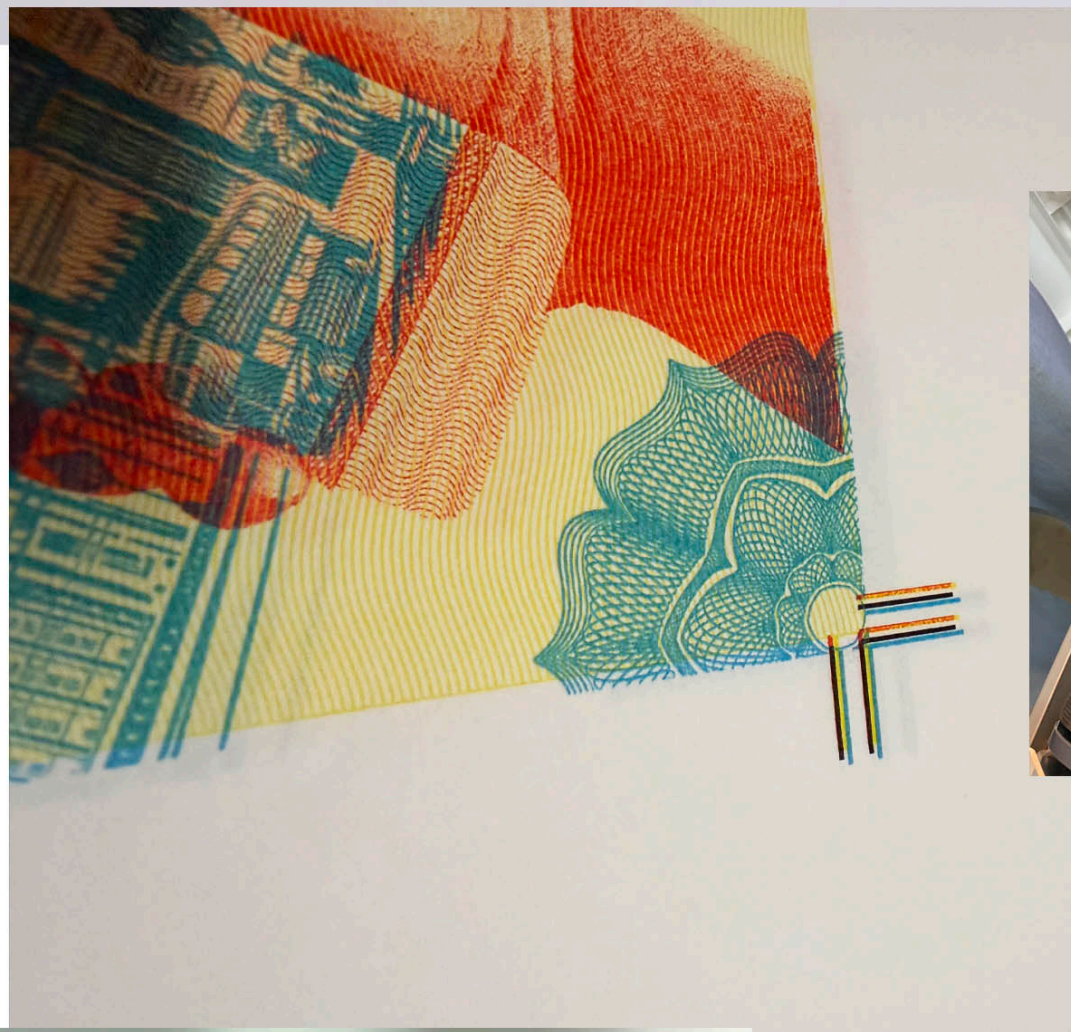


# Chicken House

Esther Waller  
Publishing Manager, Chicken House Books.  
**PRESENTATION 4/2/26**

- Concept, colonialism's viability
- Tone of Voice, text length
- Age group
- Production
- Advice on testing





ARENA NAT. SMOOTH A3 LG  
90gsm



# Takeaways from last week

- Not sure that this passport format works in the same way that it did initially. Because it's so loaded, it kind of limits what you can do with it (?). *There was something about the foldout that wasn't contained.* If it's on the table and we're engaging with it, is it something about looking at scale, magnitude. So could there be a map in there? Being able to grasp the idea of *vast histories, passport feels contained to meet that.* Does the book therefore accompany other things, it's one component of it, so when you travel places this is helping you understand? Through engaging with objects, clothes etc, that passport metaphor needs to feel more connected.
- A *workbook* would be a good idea, so things happening. Illustrations works well but there could be space for drawing, adding in information.
- different types of kids and families. *What to these mixed conversations look like?*
- Play can be used to communicate complexity to the kids. *Workshop?*
- Play and seriousness need to interlink. References have clear position. How radical or sanitized is it going to be? Do you want to be *provocative* about it?
- Not a GAME an *ACTIVITY*

# What's my enquiry?

End of Unit 2:

*"Can parents and children engage with colonial legacy together?"*

Re-articulated line of enquiry, 15/1/26:

*"Can parents and children find out what it means to be a global citizen?"*

Re-articulated line of enquiry, 22/1/26  
and 3/2/26:

*"How can we find a way to communicate complex colonial histories to children?"*

# Sources...



Gabby Offer  
Head of English

Oakfield Academy, Frome



Esther Waller  
Publishing Manager

Chicken House Books, Frome  
(Interview 040226)



Tina Gaisford-Waller  
Manager and bookseller

Hunting Raven Books, Frome



Samantha Williams  
Founder of BookLove,  
travelling multicultural book  
carnival! London.

## BACKGROUND -

I am a white British parent of two children, now aged 12 and 15 years. We left the UK to live abroad for a few years and the legacy of Empire was everywhere.

I knew little about colonialism and neither did my children. I wasn't taught much about it in school and thirty years later the same can be said about them. I began to explore acknowledgement of colonial legacy on our return to the UK through my work on an MA in Graphic Communication Design.

## AIM -

To find a space where parents and kids can learn together about our shared colonial past and its influence on the way we live in today. This will be through an interactive book that explores the everyday legacies and hidden histories of the British Empire in what we eat, what we wear, how we travel and how we live in 21st century UK.

## SOME QUESTIONS -

I am approaching various stakeholders in books for children, from teachers to campaigners to publishers and hopefully, a broad set of families. Please take a moment to consider and answer the following questions, they will be quoted in my research and writing for my Masters at the University of the Arts London, and ultimately could help me create a publication that will highlight this subject area for other parents and their kids.

*- Do you think the UK education system provides a broad and balanced education which adequately examines British imperialism as well as histories and cultures from around the world?*

*- What age group do you think is the most appropriate and effective for discussion and learning around colonialism?*

*- Can you recommend any good books that address Empire and colonial legacy for kids?*

*- What is the best way to encourage colonial acknowledgment with kids? What is working and what isn't from your perspective?*

*- Should parents be engaged in that acknowledgement and learning as well? If so, could a workshop environment where kids and their parents learn together work?*

*- Various campaigns, petitions, consultations and government strategies have come and gone in recent years. If kids in the UK aren't learning broadly enough about this subject, what in your opinion could disrupt and highlight the discussion? If it time to be more radical, what could that look like?*

# Responses



Gabby Offer  
Head of English

Oakfield Academy, Frome

working on it



Esther Waller  
Publishing Manager

Chicken House Books, Frome  
(Interview 040226)

- Focus groups aren't really a thing in British childrens' publishing. Ask a school or a community group
  - 9-12 feels right.
  - *akidsco* feels like 'a schooly moment' where kids are being preached to but don't want to learn. Show me a kid who would read this alone! Woke for woke's sake?
  - This will be quite 'schooly' by nature, no kid will seek this unless prompted. So travel or airport moment, or branded as learning together is a very good way of placing this. We get few teachable moments, this could be one of them.
  - Object approach good, makes it universal by accident! Vert British though, this could not work abroad.
  - This could work commercially. Point of sale, low price point, activity book.
  - Illustration feels child friendly and appropriate, why not go further with the humour, be confident?
  - treasure hunt around the house. what is in your house? what else can you find?
  - kids attention spans are decreasing, writing shorter chapters, making narrativbe "gamified"
  - modernise the text a bit – if we're talking about clothes, ask the reader about fast fashion, for example. Link it to everyday stuff they can relate to.
  - Is there a more radical tone here?
- Not being afraid of the subject. could be disruptive, but that doesn't guarantee child and patent dual learning



Tina Gaisford-Waller  
Manager and bookseller

Hunting Raven Books, Frome

chased 4/2/26

[link to community book group](#)

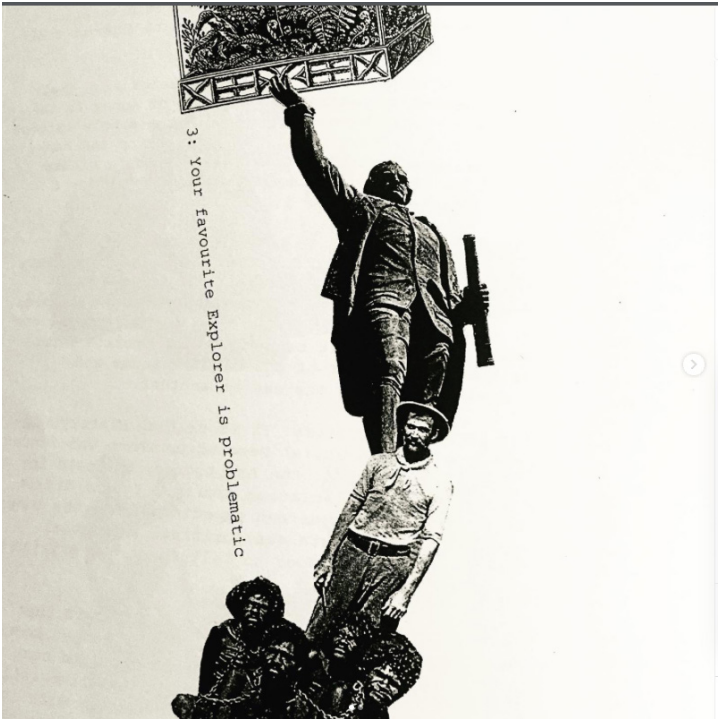
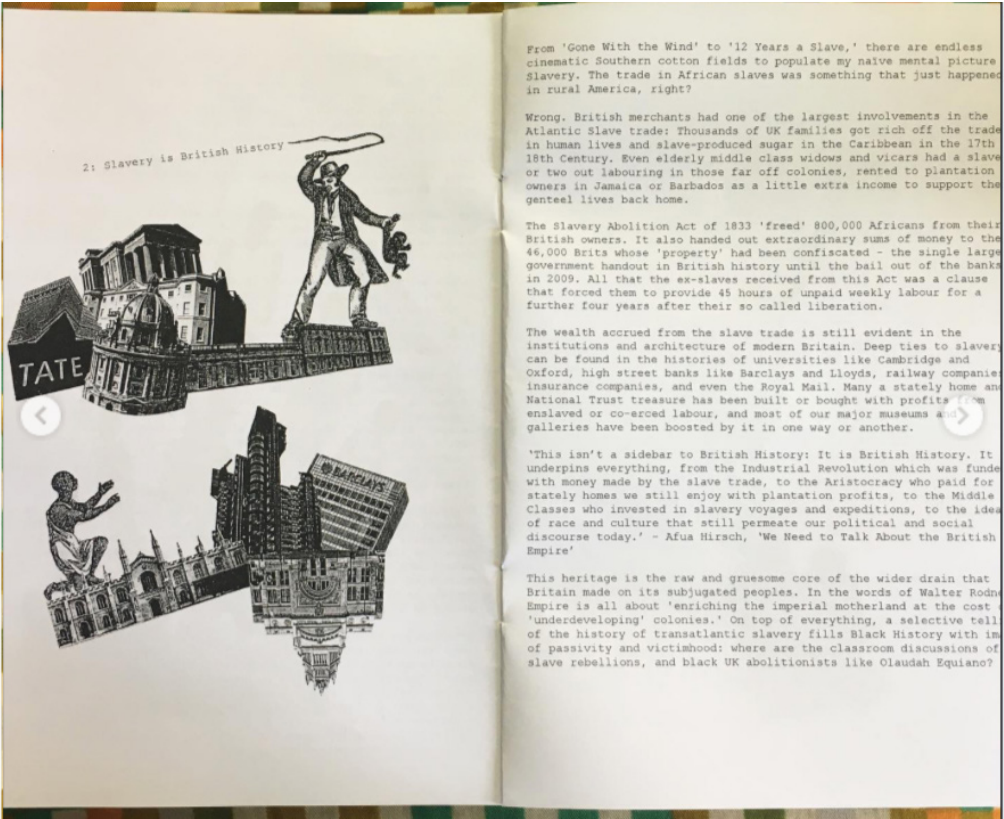


Samantha Williams  
Founder of BookLove,  
travelling multicultural book  
carnival! London.


working on it



# New references



500+ YEARS OF  
INDIGENOUS




RESISTANCE

WARRIOR Publications

Purpose: to Promote Indigenous Warrior Culture, Fighting Spirit, & Resistance Movement.


Contact: zig\_zag48@hotmail.com






Colonization and  
Decolonization

A Manual for Indigenous  
Liberation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Zig-Zag





DO YOU EVER ASK...





WHERE'S

THAT

FROM?

EVERYDAY  
THINGS FROM  
AROUND THE WORLD  
→ THAT CONNECT US







Look around you. What you eat, how you play and the habits you follow every day all have stories hiding inside them.

Some of these stories travelled a very long way, crossing oceans and centuries. They can come from a time when Britain ruled a huge empire that reached into many different countries.

Some of the things it left behind are familiar and fun, but it's important to be honest, that time also caused real harm. Many people were treated unfairly and their stories matter.

Today, the world is more connected than ever. Food, ideas, music and games travel lightning fast and we all share them. That makes you a global citizen, even if you never leave home! This book is for you, to help you spot surprising connections, ask curious questions and to remind you that being kind and fair to each other is always a good place to start.

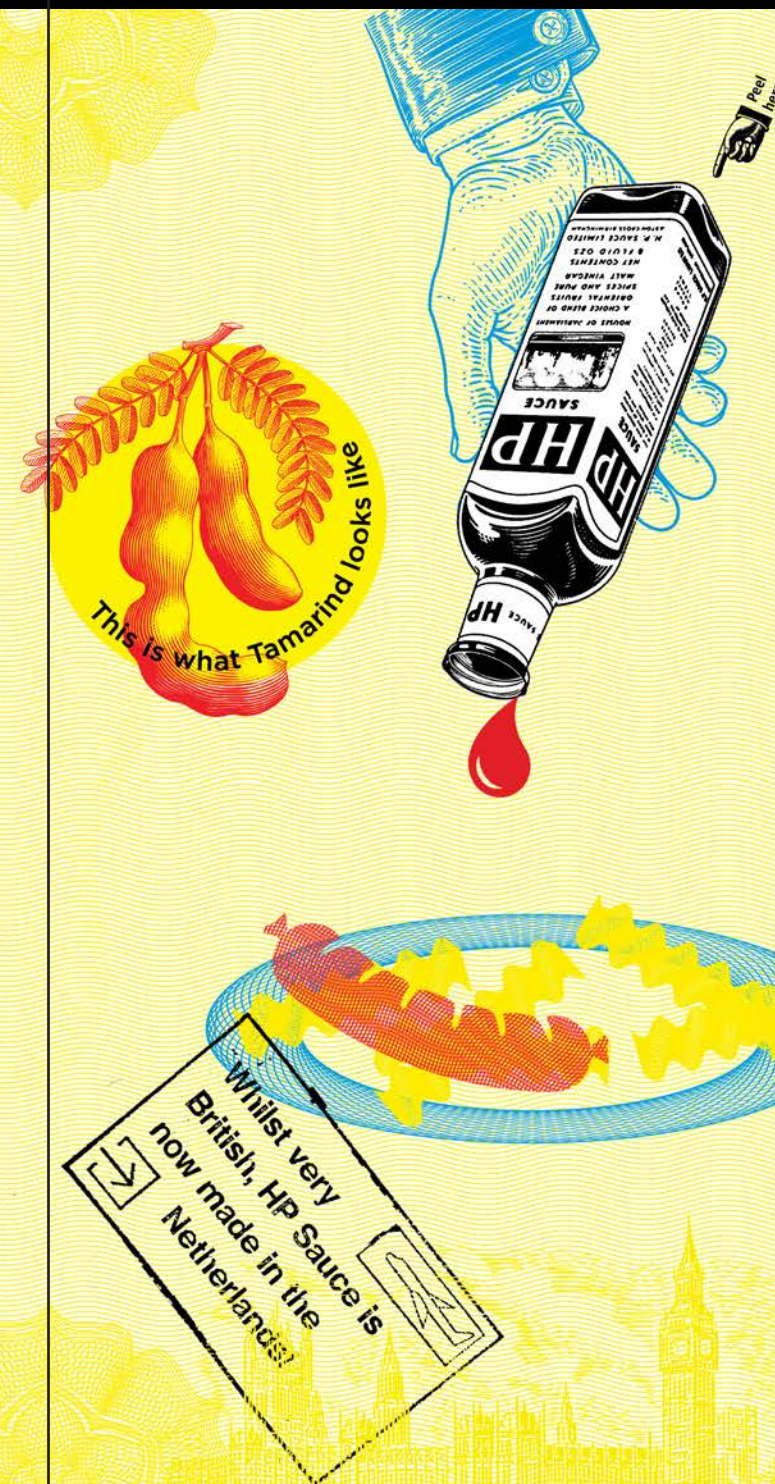
Now, **tear out the map at the back of the book** and let's take a trip together to take a closer look at the everyday things that hide huge histories!



HP Sauce has a very British name (it's short for Houses of Parliament), but its flavour went on a world adventure!

One key ingredient is tamarind, a tangy fruit that came to Britain through the old British Empire. Back then, Britain took ingredients, spices, and ideas from many countries it controlled, mixed them up, and—tada!—new sauces appeared on dinner tables.

That sounds tasty, but here's the not-so-fun part: empire life wasn't fair. Many people in those countries were treated badly, had land taken, or were forced to work so Britain could get rich. So HP Sauce is like history in a bottle: yummy on chips, but a reminder the past had sour bits too.





School uniforms didn't start as a fashion choice — they started as a control-the-chaos choice.

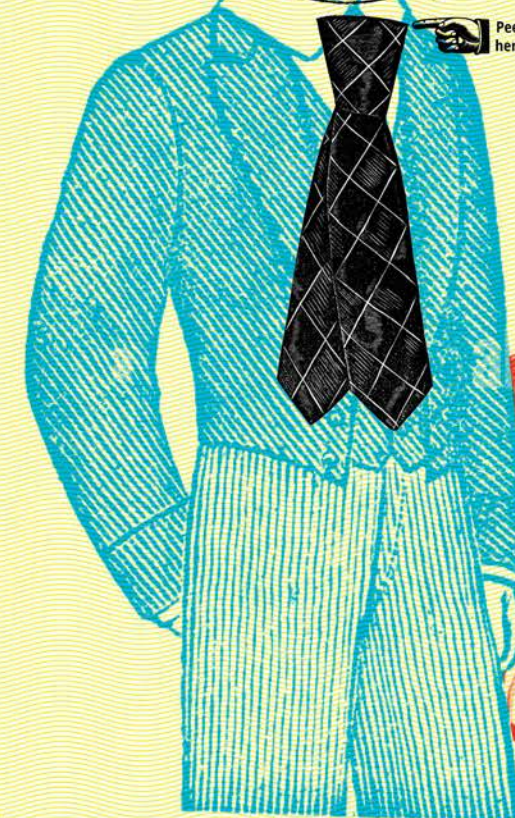
A long time ago, during the days of the British Empire, schools wanted everyone to look the same so teachers could spot troublemakers faster (spoiler: it didn't work). Uniforms spread around the world through colonial schools, especially in places ruled by Britain, because they believed matchy-matchy clothes = discipline and good behavior.

That sounds funny, but here's the serious bit: this often ignored local cultures and traditions, and kids weren't given much choice about who they could be.

So when you put on your uniform, remember: it's not just clothes — it's a leftover idea from empire times that's still telling kids to "Line up!", "Stop Talking!" and "Do Your Homework!".

# SAMUEL BROTH

## SCHOOL O



Eton jacket and vest  
For boy of 8 yrs. from 19/-  
For boy of 10 yrs. from 22/3

Messrs. S. BROTHERS fully fitted team of their Sho Parents and who are desi fitting their charges for Public or P leges, School requirement and Boys ha many years closest att Messrs. S. BROTHERS result that t ant Departm business ha very large so that eve Suits, O. Hosiery, Bo fully met a qualities ens

PATTE CATALOGUE application.

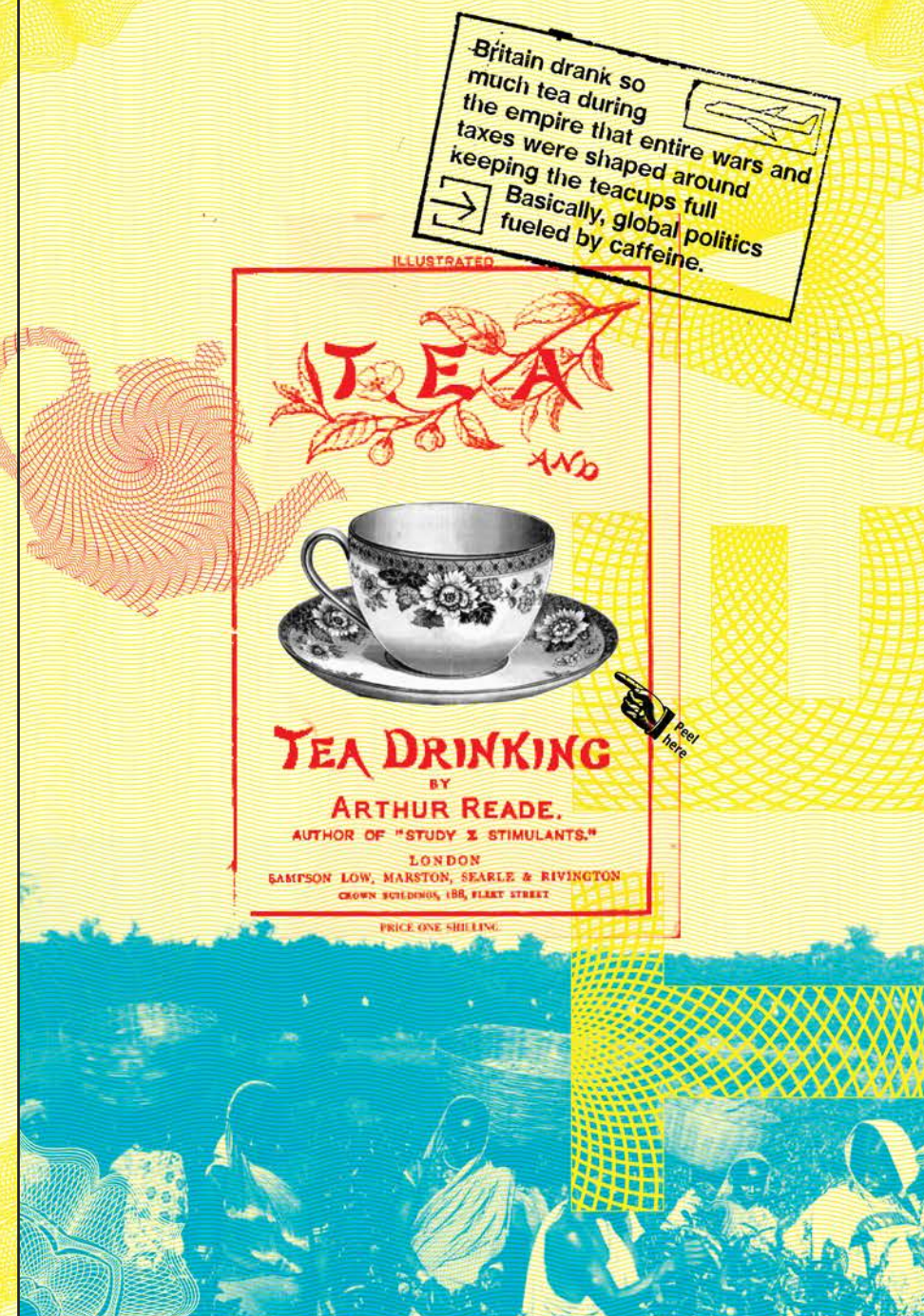


Tea started as a leaf,  
not a British thing at all! It came  
from China and later India, and Britain  
loved it so much they basically said, "We'll have  
ten cups, please."

During the British Empire, tea was grown and shipped all  
over the world so everyone in Britain could sip happily.

But here's the not-funny bit: empire rules were unfair.  
Many people were forced to grow tea, paid very little,  
and had their land taken so Britain could drink more.

So tea is warm and cozy—but it also  
reminds us that history can be  
comforting and a bit bitter.

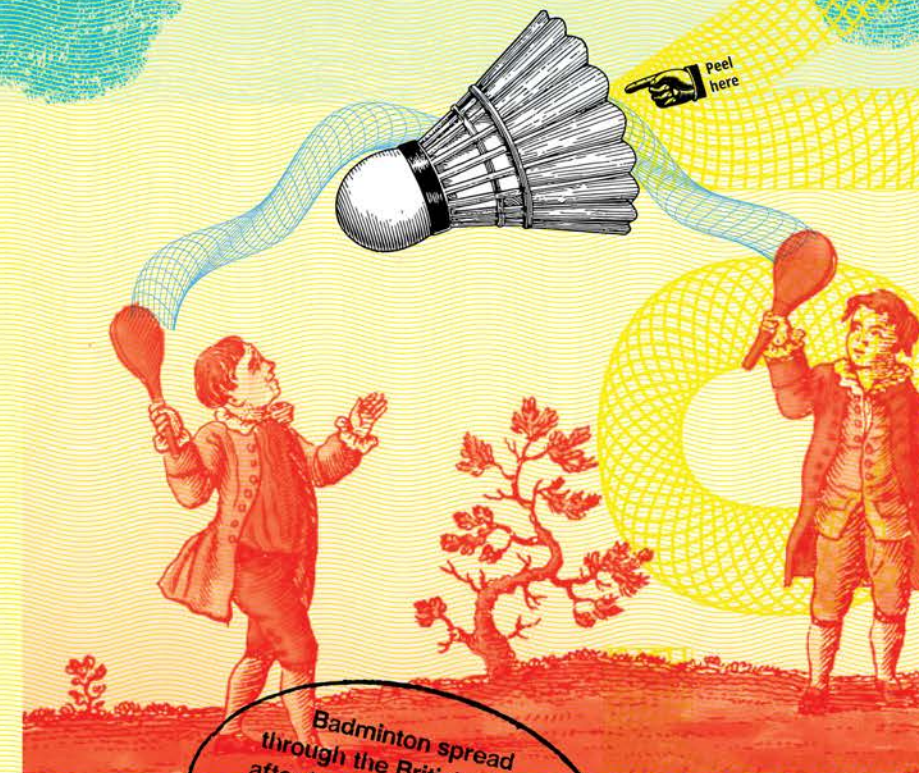




Badminton began during the British Empire thanks to boredom, feathers, and a big fancy house.

In India, people played a game called **Poona**, hitting a feathery shuttle with rackets. British army officers tried it, liked it, and thought, "This will be great back home!" They took it to England and played it at Badminton House, which accidentally gave the game its name.

As the Empire spread, so did badminton—traveling faster than the shuttle itself. What started as colonial free time became a worldwide sport. Not bad for a game invented because soldiers needed something to do!



Badminton spread through the British Empire after bored officers in India ★ borrowed a local game and accidentally named it after a house. ★



Long before anyone  
opened a smart phone with their  
thumb, fingerprinting started in British-  
controlled India.

In the 1800s, British officials in India noticed that everyone's fingerprints were different (even twins—sorry, twins). One official thought, "Hey, this is better than signatures people can fake!" So fingerprints were used on contracts to stop cheating.

Later, Britain took the idea home and said, "This works for catching criminals too!" And that's how fingerprints became famous. It's a cool science win—but it also came from colonial rule, when British officials controlled people's lives and decisions in places that weren't theirs to control.

Fingerprinting spread through the British Empire because fingerprints worked on everyone—even when pens, names, and literacy didn't. In imperial bureaucracy, fingerprints turned out to be more reliable than paperwork.



Peel  
here

FINGER



# FOR GROWN UPS

This book is an invitation to learn **together**.

The everyday objects, foods, and customs in these pages come from a complicated past. The British Empire connected people and places across the world, but it also caused harm, injustice, and lasting inequalities. Talking about this history honestly matters—but it doesn't have to be heavy or frightening. With curiosity, care and conversation, it can be something we explore side by side with children.

You don't need to have all the answers. It's okay to pause, to say "**I didn't know that,**" or to wonder aloud how something familiar can have a difficult history. Those moments are part of learning. This book isn't about blame—it's about understanding how the world became the way it is, and how our lives are connected to people far beyond our own homes.

We all come from different places and stories. By reading together, asking questions, and listening to one another, we can help children grow into thoughtful, kind, and curious people. History doesn't tell us who to be—but it can help us choose to be better, **together**.



# WHERE'S THAT FROM?



Find out where the things are from by placing stickers in the spaces that match

## EVERYDAY THINGS THAT CONNECT US

