BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

NEW HISTORY AND NEW TECHNOLOGY:
Present into future
Edited by Frances Blow and Alaric Dickinson
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accompanied by
HISTORY AND NEW TECHNOLOGY
Suggestions and considerations
compiled by Alaric Dickinson, Frances Blow and Martyn Wild

These two booklets will be a great help for all those historians
who always wanted to know everything about computer assisted
learning but never dared to ask. In fact, many history teachers
and teacher trainers are diffident with regard to the use of
computers in the classroom. They fear that they will be replaced
by machinery and that the pupils will be fascinated by the
new technique but not by the history it presents. But, as Alaric
Dickinson (member of our Society) and his co-editors explain
to us, pupils are fascinated indeed; the thrill, however, lasts
after the novelty has long worn off. Computer assisted learning
(CAL) is not invented to replace the teacher but to provide
him and the pupils with another educational tool.
What is presented is not a technical manual (how to handle
your classroom computer) but an introduction. It explains how
we may make good use of this new and popular invention in our
history lessons too. Well-prepared programs stimulate pupil
activity and heighten their interest in the subject matter.
The software that is needed has mainly two aspects. It may
contain simulation games that ask the pupils to put themselves
into the shoes of historical personages (and the machine con-
trols their answers). It also can be used as databases. Now
in history teaching we use a lot of databases, from the viva
voce of the teacher, via the blackboard, to the textbook and
other printed materials. However, the scope of a computerized
database is so much wider that no other medium is able to supply
the data in equal quantities.
Although these booklets are written for the benefit of British
teachers (and contain lists of software available in the UK),
I would like to see it in the hands of the members of this
Society everywhere. In many countries the position of history
teaching is somewhat precarious, and I am afraid that we would
miss a very modern and fast bus if we neglect the educational
possibilities which are to be found in computer assisted learn-
ing.

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