History is frequently invoked in discussions of history curriculum reform. This fact is, of course, unsurprising: a 'reform' movement has, of necessity, to narrativise - for example, to model a 'present' that is in need of 'reform' and, often, to contrast this present with an earlier moment when things were 'better' or a future in which things will be better. Ironically, given the claims often made by school history's advocates about the value of 'historical thinking', the quality of the 'history' invoked in these public discussions is often very poor indeed and is often characterised, among other vices, by highly schematic and simplistic periodisation or by teleological models of process that read the past tendentially and tendentiously as a progressive movement towards our present.

Drawing on contextual methodologies in the history of ideas (Bevir, 1999; Skinner, 2001), this paper uses the work of Maurice Keatinge (1868-1935) to problematicise ahistorical thinking about the history of school history. Aspects of Keatinge's work - notably his *Studies in the Teaching of History*, 1910 - are frequently discussed in reform minded narratives of the history of history. *Studies in the Teaching of History* figures, in progressivist historical narratives, as ahead of its time and as a precursor of later 'enlightened' practice. In restorationist narratives, on the other hand, Keatinge functions as an anomaly in an otherwise comfortable 'golden age'. Both narrativisations tend to minimise Keatinge's contemporary impact. Both narrativisations tend also to read Keatinge's work out of context. This paper aims to restore *Studies in the Teaching of History* to its context in Keatinge's work and to explore philosophical and thematic connections between Keatinge's work on history pedagogy, on eugenics (*Studies in Education*, 1916) and on hypnotism (*Suggestion in Education*, 1907) in order to show that Keatinge was neither ahead of his time nor an avatar of progressivist 'errors' but was, of course, of his own time and not of ours. This paper argues that it is the 'strangeness' of Keatinge to our contemporary ears that tells us the most about his time and about ours. As history educators ought to know the only history that can teach valuable lessons about the past and the present is one that is attentive to complexity, context and specificity and that resists the temptation to subject the past to the 'enormous condescension of posterity' (Thompson, 1963).