

# 4

## The pedlar Teacher's notes

### Summary

This video unit could be used as an illustration to the anecdote in Unit 4, page 39 of the Student's Book. Helen East, a professional storyteller, tells a folk story about John Chapman, a pedlar, who dreams that his fortune lies in London. He goes to London and meets a barrow boy who recalls a dream. The barrow boy's dream is the key to John Chapman's fortune. The story is a legend; it may or may not be true.

### Language focus

**Vocabulary and expressions:** *barrow boy, carriage, cart, coach, keep your nose to the grindstone, oak, passer-by, pedlar, statue, tumbledown*

### Background information

Swaffham is a village 150 kilometres north-east of London in the county of Norfolk. The story takes place on London Bridge which was destroyed in 1831. The film is actually shot at Tower Bridge, built in the 1890s.

Although there is evidence that John Chapman existed, the story of the 'Swaffham Pedlar' is a legend. The rector of Swaffham from 1435 to 1474 compiled the *Swaffham Black Book* which is an inventory of all the work done on the church. From the entries it can be seen that a John Chapman paid for the rebuilding of the North Aisle.

### Procedure

#### Before you watch

- 1 Ask the students to match the labels on the picture with the words in the box. Tell the students that all the words are part of the story.

- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| a) coach              | f) pedlar     |
| b) carriage           | g) passer-by  |
| c) cart               | h) oak tree   |
| d) statue             | i) barrow boy |
| e) tumbledown cottage |               |

- 2 Tell the students that they are going to hear Helen East telling the story of a pedlar who gained a fortune through following a dream. Remind them that the words in Exercise 1 are all used in the story. Ask them to read the

inscription on the statue and work in pairs to guess the story behind it.

Ask a few pairs to share their stories with the rest of the class. Predictions can be checked when the students have watched the programme for the first time.

### While you watch

- 3 Ask the students to read sentences a–i before watching the programme. Tell them to watch the programme and number the events 1–9. Play the DVD.

- |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| a) 8 | b) 4 | c) 3 | d) 7 | e) 5 | f) 9 |
| g) 2 | h) 6 | i) 1 |      |      |      |

Ask the students how close the predictions they made in Exercise 2 were to the story.

- 4 Ask the students to read through the sentences. Make sure they understand that all the sentences have a mistake in them, which they should try to correct before watching the programme again.
- 5 Play the programme again for the students to check their answers to Exercise 4. You could stop the DVD after each sentence to give the students time to check their correction before continuing.

- |   |
|---|
| a) Some come to see the sights, some to get a job, some to find LOVE, some to make a fortune.         |
| b) He was a straightforward man, hardworking, he was a pedlar, TRAVELLING salesman.                   |
| c) Well, of course he took no NOTICE OF it, it was only a dream.                                      |
| d) The whole world seemed to be there, there were people, animals, HORSES, coaches, carts, carriages. |

- e) At the end of three days he was cold, he was tired and he was very DISAPPOINTED.
- f) The only way you're going to get rich is by keeping your NOSE TO the grindstone.
- g) SO, John Chapman, he hurried back to Swaffham.
- h) ... in memory of him they put up a STATUE right in the middle of the village.

## After you watch

- 6 Ask the students to discuss the expressions in pairs. Ask the class to vote on the best option for the moral of the story, or to come up with a better interpretation.

Note: *Everything comes to he who waits* is an expression used to tell someone to be patient. *Follow your dreams* is used to tell people to pursue their dreams and not be held back. *Happiness is in your own backyard* means that the things which make you most happy are probably close to you already, whether you realise it or not. *Money makes the world go round* is a reminder that the world does revolve around money.

Suggested answer:  
Happiness is in your own backyard.

- 7 Ask the students to look back at the sentences in Exercise 4 and to match them to the categories. Remind the students that these categories are all features of good oral storytelling technique. The students should be aware that some of the sentences will fit into more than one category.

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| report thoughts directly   | d          |
| report speech directly     | f          |
| contain repetition         | a, b, e    |
| contain a list             | a, b, d    |
| add detail                 | b, c, d, h |
| contain a discourse marker | g          |

- 8 Ask the students to make notes on a folk tale from their country. Remind them to include some of the storytelling techniques Helen uses. Put the students into small groups and ask them to tell their story to one another. If you have a monolingual class, groups could work together on different folk stories, then groups could tell their stories to each other. With a multilingual class the students from the same country could work together to prepare their stories and could then tell their stories to students of other nationalities.
- For more work on telling stories, refer the students to page 39 in the Student's Book.

## 4

## The pedlar

*DVD script (05:39)*

They say if you stay here long enough the whole world will pass you by. Some come to see the sights, some to get a job, some to find love, some to make a fortune and a few of them are even lucky.

There was once a man called John Chapman. He lived about a hundred miles north of London in a little village called Swaffham in a tumbledown cottage underneath an old oak tree. He was a straightforward man, hardworking, he was a pedlar, travelling salesman, although in those days you had to travel by foot. But one night he had an extraordinary dream. He heard a voice calling his name, 'John Chapman, John Chapman, get up off your back, man and pick up your pack. Take the broad track, go to London, stand on the bridge and you will find a fortune.'

Well, of course he took no notice of it, it was only a dream. But the next night, the dream came again, and the next. One, two, three. Three times lucky they say. So John Chapman, he took his pack, he said goodbye to his little cottage and the old oak tree up above and he took the broad track. He took the high road, he took the low. He took the fast road, he took the slow. He took the broad road, he took the narrow and he didn't stop walking 'til he got to London town.

So, John Chapman, he found his way to the bridge and he settled down to wait for his fortune and to watch the passers-by. The whole world seemed to be there, there were people, animals, horses, coaches, carts, carriages, people buying, people selling, people walking up and down, shouting, laughing. And John, he stood and he waited. And he waited. And he waited all day long. And the next day he waited and he waited and he waited all day long. And the third day he waited and waited and waited and nothing happened. Nobody stopped, nobody looked at him and absolutely nobody came and gave him a fortune. At the end

of three days he was cold, he was tired and he was very disappointed. Well, maybe he shouldn't have thought about a dream. Maybe he shouldn't have followed a dream.

He was just about to go when a barrow boy called to him.

'Oi!' he said. 'You! I've been watching you. You've been standing there for three days. You're not buying, you're not selling, you're just waiting. What are you up to?'

So, John Chapman, feeling a bit of a fool, told him all about his dream. Ha! Laugh? The barrow boy, he laughed 'til the tears rolled down his cheeks.

'You listen to me, mate,' he said. 'The only way you're going to get rich is by keeping your nose to the grindstone, working hard. I have dreams too. I had a lovely one the other day. I dreamt I went to some place, Swiffham, Swaffham, a little village. And there was a little cottage with a big oak tree and I started digging under the oak tree and I found a load of gold. That's what I call a good dream. But did I go chasing after it? 'Course not. You listen to me, mate. You remember my words.'

'Thank you, thank you,' said John Chapman. 'I will remember your words.' And off he went back home. So, John Chapman, he hurried back home to Swaffham. Back to the tumbledown cottage underneath the big oak tree. And you can guess what he did, can't you? He started to dig and he hadn't been digging more than a minute when his spade hit something hard. It was a box and inside the box was gold. There was enough there for him to rebuild his own house and to give half the money to other people in the village. And in memory of him they put up a statue right in the middle of the village. To John Chapman the pedlar, who went to London to find his fortune but he found it in his own backyard.