

## WWI and E2BN Resources

Year 8 Case Study - Henlow Church of England Academy. From Caroline Coster, ICT Subject Leader

My Year 8 English have been studying WWI in History and they had also looked at the work of the war poets in English. I wanted them to produce a piece of creative writing that drew on their historical knowledge of the period.

Handling objects is a form of active learning that engages children. Objects provide a concrete experience and a strong link to the past. They can provide stimuli for art, creative writing and drama as well as historical investigation. Everyone can learn from objects.

There are a surprising number of WWI artefacts around. The junk shops, flea markets and curio shops are a good place to look. eBay is also a good source: lots of posters, medals (original and replicas), original postcards, photographs, copies of *The Wiper* (a trench magazine), hat badges, buttons and so on are available, many for less than a pound or two. Some local museums also offer an object loan scheme.

*"I was a 35 year old nurse in a French hospital in WWI; it was a cold bitter January morning... A military hospital was not a very pleasant place. It stank of old blood and vomit and you could never sleep there because of the moans of agony all through the night... I have seen many things no lady should see but like they say apparently things are changing in Britain for ladies. Maybe one*

*day we won't be considered ladies - instead we will be considered strong women."* Dylon

Look for different objects that carry a theme: patriotism, propaganda, Empire, honour, life in the trenches, sweethearts...

*"They hand me a box; a small, shiny brass box. Queen Mary's face was engraved into it. This was where they got them from, the chocolate and cigarettes. It was from the Queen..."*



*"I opened it slowly hoping for cigarettes. The smell of new tobacco filled the air, joy filled me for the first time since I entered this hell."* Aaron

There are also lots of images of WWI artefacts available at: [gallery.e2bn.org](http://gallery.e2bn.org)

I borrowed a small collection of artefacts from a friend whose grandfather had served throughout the war in the 3rd Kings Own Hussars and had been part of the British Expeditionary Force. The collection included a Queen Mary Christmas 1914 box, the three WWI campaign medals (1914 Star, The British War Medal 1914 – 1918 and The Allied Victory Medal) a regimental cap badge, some original photographs of Private John Lee (on a horse in

dress uniform, formal portrait in khaki uniform, formal portrait with baby sister, informal photograph of soldiers, including John, in a French hospital) and a telegram informing John's father that John had been wounded.

Working in groups, pupils examined the objects (you could use a simple collection form or provide headings to help guide pupils' analysis).

They were encouraged to use their knowledge of WWI to discuss in their groups the context of the object and the circumstances which led to their particular item coming into being, e.g. for the photograph of John on a horse pupils were asked to imagine what John might have been able to see or hear or smell. What might have happened just before or just after the photograph was taken? Had the horse stood calmly or had John struggled to control it? Who was the man standing in the background and what did he make of the scene? How would the photographer have felt (he probably took a lot of very similar pictures that day!)? Why was the photograph taken?

Pupils wrote short narratives, in the first person, based on their artefact.

*"The man and his horse that were before John were perfect. The horse was perfectly still and I only had to take one picture of them. However, John's horse was a different story. John's horse was a nightmare, a devil in a crowd of angels. He just wouldn't keep still."* Chloe