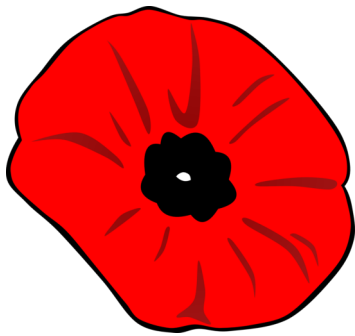


FIRST WORLD WAR SCHOOL PACK

What did children do in the
First World War?



1914 - 1918



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How to use this Learning Pack

- ⇒ This Learning Pack has been developed to provide resources and activity ideas that encourage investigation into the lives of children during the First World War.
- ⇒ The Learning Pack comprises information, pictures of original artefacts and a range of suggested activities, (including class discussion ideas and individual and group work), which support local history and heritage learning.
- ⇒ It details the many areas in which children were expected to “**do their bit**” towards the war effort, through school, home life and extra curricular activities, such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, until it became an intrinsic part of their everyday lives.
- ⇒ We hope the pack will offer many opportunities to develop skills and learning experiences through debate, practical tasks and creativity and that it will prompt conversations regarding the day-to-day lives of children during the 1914-1918 conflict and, in particular, their contribution to the war effort. We also aim to encourage deeper thought from today's younger generation about how the lives of children and attitudes towards children have evolved through the years to today.

Introduction

- Britain declared war on Germany on **4th August 1914**. The war was not expected to last long and most people believed it would all be over by Christmas. They also thought it would be like most wars before it. That is to say, it would be fought abroad and would not directly affect the daily lives of many people at home.
- However, they were wrong. The war lasted for 4 long years and it soon became clear that **everyone**, (men, women and children), was expected to "**do their bit**" towards the war effort. This was the first "**total war**."
- This was the first conflict which changed **everybody's** daily lives. **Many people faced very challenging situations.** The First World War involved the majority of the population playing a role. The contribution of **every** member of the community in the war effort, both young and old, was greatly valued and proved to be crucial to the successful conduct of the war.

Consider the ways in which the civilian population faced hardships.

Look at this Recruitment Poster:



This poster from 1915 was designed by Robert Baden-Powell who established the Scouting movement. It shows how different sections of society are contributing to the war effort, including a scout.

Activity Ideas:

- ⇒ Can you spot the scout? How does his uniform differ from today's scouts?
- ⇒ What other jobs are the men and women doing in the picture?
- ⇒ What about the man with his hands in his pockets? What message do you think Robert Baden-Powell was trying to convey to the public?
- ⇒ Design your own poster encouraging people to contribute to the war effort.

- When the war broke out, children were enjoying all the usual childhood things, such as playing, going to school, doing their homework and helping with household chores. However, events happening around the world would change their lives forever.
- Many British children were encouraged to lend a hand with the war work; they wanted to support their fathers, brothers and uncles who were away fighting at the Front.
- The First World War affected **all** of British society. Around 6 million men volunteered or were conscripted to fight, leaving many important and unplanned gaps in the workforce. In addition, the new war economy created many new jobs to equip, arm and feed the armed forces as well as to sustain the civilians on the home front. Men, women and children left behind were expected to fill these roles, working in agriculture, munitions and industry. Children everywhere now had many jobs to do, and those that lived in Wimborne and East Dorset were no different.
- The population was gradually affected by increasing shortages of everyday food and fuel and by dramatic price rises.

Why was food running short during the war? Why did this affect its cost?

- Children quickly learnt to live without sweets. As a result of the war and German U-Boats sinking ships carrying food, sugar was rationed in Britain at the end of 1917, with further food rationing in 1918.

Did you know?

At that time, Britain imported all of its sugar from abroad. Due to the war, this was now in short supply. Therefore, people were encouraged to not eat sugar and it was even seen as being “unpatriotic” to eat sweets. As an alternative special treat for their children, Mums made chocolate biscuits from a mix of flour, cocoa, butter, ground rice, mashed potatoes, egg and treacle. Do you like the sound of that?

⇒ **Activity Idea:** Why not research the recipe and have a go at making these biscuits yourself, to see what they tasted like?



- Due to food shortages, children were encouraged to grow fruit and vegetables and to help save food.
- The "Win the War Cookery Book" declared,

"The child who saves bread is a soldier too."

- They aimed to teach children not to just eat less, but to also eat slowly, as this was considered good for their health and saved food. It was important to keep the younger generation healthy.



What is "social class?"

What does the word "patriotic" mean?

- Children were organised to do "patriotic war work" in support of the war, regardless of their social class. This not only increased patriotism and raised awareness about scarcity in wartime, but also made the point that, if children were making an effort, so should adults.
- After the First World War, wars would never be fought in the same way again. They would not only involve trained soldiers on the battlefield in faraway lands, but also the "civilian population" left behind on the "Home Front."



What do you think "patriotic war work" involved?

Let's look at some of the ways the children of East Dorset helped with the war effort on the Home Front during the First World War.

"Doing one's bit."

This excerpt from the Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine, dated October 1915, written by the vicar of the Minster at the time, Rev. Fletcher, gives an insight into the importance placed on every member of the local community helping with war work.

On doing one's bit. We look with interest at the list, near the entrance of the Church, of the men who from our own parish, &c., have volunteered—and many of whom are engaged in active service. They have gone to the front because they are anxious to “do their bit” in the cause of justice, and truth, and right, and on behalf of their country and their King. Others are employed in making munitions. Many ladies are helping their country by being engaged in Red Cross work, or in making and providing comforts for our sailors and soldiers, for the wounded or prisoners. We all want to do something to help. When the Registration forms were brought round a week or two ago, many asked themselves “What can I put down?” “What can I do to help?” “How can I do my bit?” But there are many ways, in addition to those above mentioned, in which we can “do our bit,” and in which we can serve our country. A generation is growing up of boys who will be the men of the future. We want to do what we can to train them aright, to make them earnest God fearing men, to help them to fight the good fight. Some number of these are in our Sunday School. But the ranks of our teachers have been lessened in consequence of the war and through other causes. Recruiting, Red Cross work, &c., have taken away some of our helpers, and an earnest appeal is made for others who will come and help in the Sunday School, &c., and thus “do their bit for their Country.” The response to the call may mean a certain amount of trouble. It may mean the giving up of a certain amount of leisure time and of ease. But when we think of our brothers who are doing their bit in the trenches, of the discomfort and hardship which they endure, of the way in which they are risking their lives and their limbs for their country's welfare, it does not seem much that we are asking; and yet it is a very real “bit,” and that of most useful work for our country. Who will volunteer?

Take a moment to read the article.

- ⇒ What is the aim of the vicar?
- ⇒ What persuasive techniques does the vicar use to achieve his goal?
- ⇒ How do you think it made people feel to read this article?
- ⇒ Do you think children felt under pressure to “do their bit”?
- ⇒ Do you think an article like this would have the same effect today? Give reasons.

Activity Idea:

Have a go at creating your own piece of persuasive writing. Imagine you are asking your friends, family and neighbours to help you with a very big task that will involve them giving up something that is precious to them. How would you persuade them?

School Life

- Wartime conditions made the work of schools very difficult. Many male teachers had either volunteered or were called up for military service. They were replaced by women or by men who were not of military age or who were not fit to fight.



Look at this photo. What do you notice about it?



Source: MED ALB-023.003 (QES-P-041a)

This picture was taken in 1914. These men are the staff of **QE School, Wimborne**. This photo was probably taken just before the outbreak of war.

Now, look again at the photo above. How many of the men in this picture would have left to fight in the war, do you think?

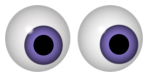
Did you know?

Conscription during the First World War began when the British government passed the **Military Service Act** in January 1916. The act stated that single men aged between 18 and 40 years old may be called up for military service unless they were widowed with children or religious ministers. Over the war, the age range was extended, reaching 51 towards the end of 1918. However, thousands of men challenged their conscription seeking exemption from military service.

Group Discussion: Consider what it would feel like if the male teachers in your school suddenly left to fight a war. What effect would it have on those left behind? How would you feel if your older brothers, dads and uncles left too?

- Teachers felt it was their duty to rally support for the war among children and to organise them to do "patriotic war work." This included collecting money for war charities, collecting recyclables, helping with the harvest, growing vegetables, sewing uniforms, collecting conkers and acorns, picking and preserving berries, entertaining and caring for wounded soldiers, selling war bonds and knitting "comforts" to be sent to the Front.

What are "comforts" and why did the soldiers need them?



Look at this photograph.



Source: MED BOR-133

The photo above was taken in 1915 in the playground of the primary school in School Lane, Wimborne.

- ⇒ What are the children doing? Why do you think they were asked to do this?
- ⇒ Can you read the words and initials they are spelling out? What do you think they stand for?
- ⇒ How do you think it made the children feel to take part in this activity?

- The children are spelling out the words "The Allies" and F.I.B.R.E.S.
- F.I.B.R.E.S stands for France, Italy, Belgium, Russia, Empire and Serbia. Why did they pick these countries in particular?

Activity Ideas:

- 1) What is "patriotism"? Think of other words which might inspire a feeling of patriotism.
 - * Go out onto the field or playground, or use the hall, and see if you can organise yourselves as a group to spell out the words you have thought of with your bodies, like the children in the picture. Is it quite difficult to do or is it easy? Does it require a lot of teamwork?
 - * Do you think the teachers were hoping to demonstrate the fact that working together was important and the idea that "everybody counted" with this task?
 - * If possible, ask your teacher to take a photo of you from high up so you can see how well you succeeded in your task.

What other activities could you do as a whole class to encourage "patriotism" and teamwork?

- 2) Story Starter: Imagine you are one of the children in the photo. Write a story, or a diary entry, about the day this picture was taken. Talk about your emotions and how it made you feel.
- 3) Write an "Acrostic Poem" using the letters of the words you have chosen as the first letter of each line. Convey your feelings around that word through the poem.

- There is much evidence, from local publications at the time and school logbooks, that the children of East Dorset villages and towns were heavily involved in "patriotic war work" encouraged by their teachers.



School Log Books have been kept by headteachers of schools since 1862. They report the daily events and activities of the school, such as pupil attendance, staff changes, illness and prize-giving.

- Local School Logbooks are valuable sources of information for us as historians. They help us to build a picture about what was happening in our local schools during the First World War and the sort of activities the children were doing.
- We can see from logbooks that the teaching staff changed several times over the course of the war in many local schools, mainly due to men being called up for military service. This would have caused considerable disruption.

In this excerpt from **Gaunt's Elementary School**, the headteacher writes in the logbook:

31 May, 1916 — Mr Lock left to join his regiment. Miss Burt commenced work as supply teacher.

Source: Dorset History Centre S-120/2/1

A year later, Mr Lock returned to the school from military service and Miss Burt had to leave.

At Wimborne Council School, we can sense the Headmaster's frustration when three of his teachers volunteered in this logbook entry of November 1914, right at the start of the war.

13 Nov, 1914 – Messrs Avery Bickell and Grosse have enlisted in the 9th Hants Regiment Territorial and will commence their military duties on 16th inst. Only 2 of permanent staff now remain, Headmaster and Mr Wallis, and there is no definite information of more than 1 supply to replace them although Education Committee have received weeks' notice of these members leaving during period of war. To meet the emergency and to provide for the possible coming and going of supply teachers, a complete reorganisation of school is necessary, a new timetable has been drawn up and work which has been possible with permanent teachers has been withdrawn and replaced with something of a simpler nature. It will not be possible to adhere strictly to timetable or syllabus. The chief aim of Headteacher will be to keep instruction going with resources at his command for the time being.

Source: Museum of East Dorset

Read the extract again.

⇒ **How does the Headteacher propose to cope with the lack of permanent staff?**

Did you know?

In 1914, education was only compulsory from the ages of 5 to 12. Many children left for full-time employment at the age of 13 and only half of the children stayed in school until the age of 14. It wasn't until 1918 that education was made compulsory up until 14 years old.

Today, in England, young people have to stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18.

- We can see from many local school logbook entries that children from all around the district, especially boys, were granted *Labour Certificates* or *Exemption Certificates*. These allowed them to be away from school to help with important war work, even when they were under the school leaving age.

EDMONDSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

23 Apr 1915— Charles Stevens aged 12 years is employed in agricultural work under the new rule.

19 Jul 1917— Number on book—38 including 3 boys on war work.

7 Jan 1918— Reginald Cobb and Tom Roberts (war workers have not yet returned to school.)

Source: DHC S-7/1

MANNINGTON HOLT BRITISH SCHOOL LOGBOOK

5 Jun 1915— Labour Certificates received for partial exemption issued on 30th May for William Hayward and Hubert Percy. They will now attend school as part-timers.

17 Oct 1916— Labour Certificates received for partial exemption issued Bertie Morgan. He will now attend school as part-timer.

22 Jan 1917— Total Exemption Certificate has been issued for Edwin Witherington who is over 13 years of age. His name is removed from register today.

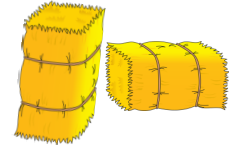
Source: DHC S-35/2/1

HORTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

16 Apr 1915— A mother came on Tuesday and asked to have a girl of 11 years presented for a Labour Certificate on 24th inst. That she may be at liberty to help the farmer's wife in the house.

Source: DHC S-40/2/1

- ⇒ Do you think people had the same attitude towards school and education as we do today?
- ⇒ Do you think that some people may have taken advantage of Labour Exemption Certificates? If so, how and why?
- ⇒ Consider the logbook entry from Horton C of E School. Does it surprise you that a girl as young as 11 may have been allowed to miss school to help at home and on the farm? How do you think this made her feel? What sort of jobs do you think she was expected to do?



- The area of East Dorset and its surrounding villages was largely agricultural. This means that a lot of the men who went away to war would have worked on farms and in the farming industry. Dorset War Agricultural Committee debated whether boys under 12 could be released from school to help.

Study the school logbook entries from the time. Which tasks did the children help with?

CANFORD MAGNA CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

15 Apr 1915— 2 boys—Fred Roberts and Aubrey Pomeroy have granted certificates of exemption from school for the purpose of working on Manor Farm.

Source: DHC S-97/2/1

SIXPENNY HANDLEY SCHOOL LOGBOOK

14 Aug 1914— Attendance much depleted owing to farmers employing children in harvesting work — no sufficient numbers of men being available on account of calling up Reservists etc.

Source: Sixpenny Handley School

WOODLANDS SCHOOL LOGBOOK

18 Jun 1915— School closed for one week in order that the children may help at hay harvest.
26/27 Apr 1917— School closed for 2 days owing to the urgent need of planting potatoes.

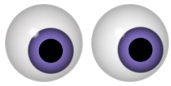
Source: DHC S-141/2/2

HORTON C.OF E. SCHOOL LOGBOOK

15 Sep 1916— School opened on Monday with only fair attendance. Some of the boys still busy at harvest work.

27 Jul 1917— Several children have been away hay-making this week in after-

Source: DHC S-40/2/1



These are the pupils of Shapwick School in 1916.



Source: MED PAM-138

- ⇒ Look carefully at the children in this photograph.... try to imagine yourself in their place.
- ⇒ Do some of the children appear more well off than others? Why do you get this impression?
- ⇒ Think about the lives of these children when you read the following logbook extracts which were written by the headteacher when these children attended the school.

SHAPWICK SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 18 Jun 1915— Very poor attendance this week. Boys kept away for hay-making.
- 23 Jun 1915— Only 6 boys present this afternoon out of 19 on the books. All employed in hay-making.
- 24 Sep 1915— Report of the Diocesan Inspectorate “there were by the way no boys in this group, all the elder ones being at work in wartime.”
- 9 Jun 1916— School closed for 3 weeks as boys are required to help with hay-making.
- 3 Jul 1916— School reopened this morning.
- 4 Jul 1916— Hay-making not finished. Only 10 boys present out of 23 on the books.
- 4 Jun 1918— 4 boys employed this week for hay-making.
- 28 Jun 1918— 4 boys employed this week for hay-making.
- 18 Oct 1918— Several children absent this week, some with bad colds, others picking up potatoes.

Source: DHC S-12/2/2

- We can see that it was commonplace for local schools to shut so that the children could help with harvest work.
- From the dates of the logbook entries, we can also see that this happened throughout the whole course of the war.

Did you know?

To combat the food shortage, many schools dug up sections of their playgrounds or nearby fields and planted vegetables, for which the children were responsible.

In 1918, children in rural communities were granted an extra 6 weeks of summer holiday to help gather in the harvest.

Consider the following school logbook entries.

WIMBORNE COUNCIL SCHOOL LOGBOOK

29 Sep. 1914 — Mr C E Panslow, County Horticultural Instructor visited the gardening class and advised with reference to the cultivation of the extra ground taken to increase in a small degree the country's food supply.

Source: Museum of East Dorset

WOODLANDS SCHOOL LOGBOOKS

14 Mar 1917— Owing to the urgency of the demand of Mr Lloyd George for the necessity of growing food stuffs, volunteers were asked for among the children and 15 children offered their help. Miss Palmer has loaned her garden for the purpose and it has been divided into 9 plots. Children began their work today.

Source: DHC S-141/2/2

- ⇒ Who was Mr Lloyd George?
- ⇒ What type of "food stuffs" do you think the children would have grown? Do you think this changed at different times of the year?
- ⇒ Think about your school grounds. Is there anywhere you could grow fruit and vegetables?
- ⇒ Try growing some of your own fruit or vegetables in tubs or pots.





Did Acorns win the war?



- In 1917, a call from **The Ministry of Munitions** went out for children to collect horse chestnuts - also known as conkers - and acorns.

Why do you think this was?

Why were conkers and acorns considered so important in helping the Allies win the First World War?

What time of year do you think it was? Why?



- Notices were pinned to children's classroom walls, in parks and playgrounds.

**ACORNS AND HORSE CHESTNUTS
NEEDED.**

**THIS COLLECTION IS INVALUABLE
WAR WORK AND IS VERY URGENT.
PLEASE ENCOURAGE IT.**

- Children were asked specifically to collect the conkers "without the green husks."

Activity Idea:

Design your own poster or notice encouraging children to collect acorns and conkers. How can you make it appealing to children?

Remember: the children were not told the reason they needed to collect the acorns and conkers. It was top secret!

Did you know?

- ⇒ Conkers and acorns contain a substance called **acetone**.
- ⇒ Acetone was used in the production of **cordite**, which was used to make explosives for the military.
- ⇒ During the First World War, huge quantities of cordite were needed for ammunition and to make explosives to fight the battles.



- Before 1915, although some acetone was made in Britain, most was imported from other countries, like the United States of America.
- Stocks of acetone ran very low from as early as 1914. It quickly became clear that an alternative supply needed to be found at home.



Hi! I'm Dr. Weizmann. Do you know, I became the President of Israel in 1949.

Why were stocks of the chemical acetone running low?

- In 1915, a chemist called Doctor Chaim Weizmann found a way to produce acetone from starch. It became known as "The Weizmann Process."
- Acorns and Conkers are a source of starch.
- In April 1915, Dr Weizmann was introduced to Winston Churchill. Churchill could see the potential of using this new method of acetone production for the war effort.
- Churchill asked Dr Weizmann to build a factory which produced acetone in this way.
- The **Royal Naval Cordite Factory** in Holton Heath, Dorset, was established.



Find out more:

- ⇒ Who was Winston Churchill?
- ⇒ What else did he do in his life?
- ⇒ Was his plan for producing acetone a great success?



Source: www.historicengland.org.uk

This is a picture of the Acetone Fermentation Tank at the Royal Naval Cordite Factory, in Holton Heath, where the conkers and acorns were prepared.

- The children of East Dorset set to work collecting as many conkers and acorns as they could manage. These were then sent by train to the top secret factory in Holton Heath.
- Around 3000 tonnes of conkers and acorns were collected by Britain's children in 1917. (That's a lot of conkers!)
- Once again, children in local schools were given special permission to miss lessons to do this important war work, as we can see from school logbooks.

HOLT CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

26 Oct. 1917 - Closed school for one week to enable the children to gather acorns for RN Cordite Factory, Holton.

5 Nov. 1917 - Reopened school. Children have gathered 125 bushels of acorns.

Source: DHC S-142/2/2

WIMBORNE COUNCIL SCHOOL LOGBOOK

16 Oct. 1917 - H W Irvine and Mr Fox Strangeways visited school with reference to collection of acorns for Holton factory.

23 Oct. 1917 - School closed in afternoon and under supervision of staff children collected acorns - 15 bushels.

26 Oct. 1917 - Being a fine day, children sent away all day to collect acorns - 48 bushels now collected.

30 Oct. 1917 - 85 bushels of acorns sent away for munitions.

Source: Museum of East Dorset

GAUNT'S ELEMENTARY / HOLT SCHOOL LOGBOOK

26. Oct. 1917 - School closed at end of afternoon session until 1 November for acorn gathering.

3 Nov. 1917 - As result of school being closed for acorn picking 107 bushels were sent to Wimborne Malting Company, Poole Road, Wimborne.

Source: DHC S-120/2/1

The school logbooks mention that the children collected "bushels" of acorns.
What is a bushel?

The children could earn seven shillings and sixpence (7s.6d.) for collecting a hundredweight of acorns/conkers. In today's money, that's around 37.5p for collecting 50.8kg of conkers.



Remember:

37.5p would have been worth a lot more then than it is today.



- ⇒ Where do you think the children went to find acorns?
- ⇒ Think about the area around your school or home. Where do you think you could go to find conkers or acorns?
- ⇒ Can they be found all year round?

- Although children collected **a lot** of acorns and conkers for the war effort, the overall plan to use them in the production of cordite for ammunition was not a great success. It turned out that acorns and conkers are not a great source of acetone and the production process wasn't very efficient. Piles of unused conkers and acorns were left to rot.

Conkers and Acorns Activity Ideas:

⇒ **Let's have some fun with maths!**

In today's measurements, we know that if the children collected 50.8kg of conkers, they would earn 37.5p. But, how many conkers would that need?

The average weight of a healthy conker is around 8 grams.



⇒ **Let's get creative!**



Conkers come from Horse Chestnut trees and acorns come from Oak trees. The leaves of these trees are a very distinctive shape which makes them easy to recognise. Using the leaf templates in the activity pack, create a piece of artwork to put on the wall. Or, if you have the real thing available, try some leaf rubbing using wax crayons. Be as imaginative and creative as you can!

⇒ **Role Play!**

As a group, read through and act out "The Conkerers" script, kindly supplied by Gill & Tony Horitz of Wimborne Community Theatre. (www.wimbornecommunitytheatre.co.uk)

Once you have read through and acted out the scenario, consider the following:

- Design some badges which the "Wimborne League of Young Patriots" might have worn.
- Why has Alanna and Belle's eldest sister's face gone all yellow?
- Find out how to play "Grandmother's Footsteps" and have a go!
- Why do you think Nurse Coggin told the children to return home?



Berries



- Growing your own food was very important during the First World War, as food was so scarce. The suggestion of digging up public spaces, like parks, to grow fruit and vegetables came in 1916.
- In February 1917, Wimborne Urban District Council discussed digging up the local hockey ground if there was sufficient demand for allotments.
- As well as helping with the gardening and growing vegetables, children played a very important role in picking and gathering fruit to be preserved or made into jams.

Which types of fruit do you think the children picked?

- A request went out from the county "Agricultural War Committee" for children to help with the gathering of fruit. The children of East Dorset once again rose to the challenge. Local schools were encouraged to compete with each other to see who could collect the greatest weight of blackberries.

Read the following logbook extracts.

HORTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 13 Sep. 1918 - School reopened on Monday with good attendance. In accordance with instruction from the Education Committee children were given 2 half days, Monday and Thursday afternoons, to pick blackberries for the Government and 280 lbs were despatched during the week.
- 20 Sep. 1918 - Half day holidays were given for picking blackberries on Tuesday and Wednesday and 356 lbs were sent during the week.
- 30 Sep. 1918 - Half day to gather blackberries.

Source: DHC S-40/2/1

VERWOOD NATIONAL SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 4,5,9 Sep. 1918 - As many children as wished were allowed to go and gather blackberries as desired by County Council authorities the gathering taking place during afternoon sessions.
- 12 Sep. 1918 - 14 Children allowed to go blackberrying.

Source: DHC S-225/2/3

WIMBORNE COUNCIL SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- Sep. 1918 - School closed afternoons (11-13, 17-19, 24, 30) to enable boys to gather blackberries for the Ministry of Food.
- 1 Oct. 1918 - Boys have gathered 1 ton 32 pounds of blackberries. Sent to jam factory at Romsey. Teachers attended each evening to weigh quantity brought by each boy.

Source: MED

EDMONDSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 9 Sep. 1918 - Received permission during holidays to close school on certain afternoons each week to enable children to gather blackberries.

Source: DHC S-7/1

Did you know?

- ⇒ At the time of the First World war, we used the Imperial Measurement System. That is to say, the berries were weighed in **Pounds (lbs)** and **Ounces (oz)**.
- ⇒ Find out how many ounces are in 1 pound. Does this system seem quite complicated?
- ⇒ What unit of measurement do we use today to weigh things? Do you know what this system is called?

- ⇒ Why were the berries used to make jam? Why didn't they just put them into pies, store them fresh or freeze them?
- ⇒ Do you think children would be asked to do this activity today?
- ⇒ Where did the children go to gather the berries?

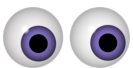


"Comforts"



- Girls knitted socks, scarves, mittens and other articles of warm clothing to keep the British soldiers warm in the trenches on the Front Line. These were known as "comforts."
- This activity was known as "Knitting for Tommy." (British soldiers were nicknamed Tommies.)
- There were many pamphlets and books produced at the time by wool manufacturers, associations and charities, which gave simple instructions for the much needed items.
- The girls of East Dorset were extremely successful in fulfilling the task asked of them. Knitting and crocheting was a skill that girls were expected to have.

The photograph below was taken in 1914. It shows a group of girls from **Gaunts School** knitting for the soldiers in the First World War.



Source: MED

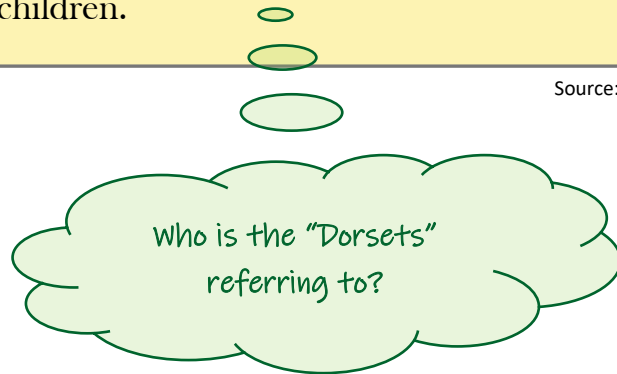
Let's look at the School Logbooks.

HORTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

6 Nov. 1914 - Needlework scheme arranged in July is in abeyance at present as children are busy knitting comforts for our soldiers at the front and making garments for destitute Belgian children.

20 Nov. 1914 - Second parcel of knitting containing 6 pairs of socks and 3 scarves was despatched to Lady Ilchester today for the "Dorsets" at the front. Also some underclothing for the Belgian children.

Source: DHC S-40/2/1



WOODLANDS SCHOOL LOGBOOK

18 Dec. 1915 - Received 6lbs khaki wool from 20 Market Street Poole. Children are to make into mittens for soldiers.

3 Jan. 1916 - Received 6lbs khaki wool from East Dorset Guild of Workers. Children are to make into mittens for soldiers.

21 Jan. 1916 - 50 pairs of mittens made by teachers and children sent off today.

Source: DHC S-141/2/2

CANFORD MAGNA CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LOGBOOK

17 Sep. 1918 - 6 skeins of wool for Red Cross knitting received from Lady Wimborne.

Source: DHC S-97/2/1

- ⇒ Who donated the wool for the comforts?
- ⇒ Who were these people and organisations?
- ⇒ Who was Lady Wimborne and why was she important in the area? Find out where she lived.

- Various articles in the local press at the time tell us of the children's knitting, amongst their other successes.

Our children are working hard to provide warm articles of clothing for our sailors to wear during the cold weather. *The Minster Girls* have formed a branch of the "League of young Patriots," 136 strong. Each member wears the badge of the league, subscribes regularly to the funds for providing wool, and those who are competent help in their spare time to knit socks for the soldiers. *The Pamphill Teachers and Children* have subscribed for the purchase of wool and have made mufflers and helmets for the soldiers, and mufflers, gloves, and mittens, for the sailors of the North Sea Fleet. The little children have put by a nice sum from the money given them for sweets towards the relief of the Belgian Refugees. *The G.F.S. Candidates* are meeting weekly on Saturday afternoons and knitting socks.

Source: Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine, November 1914. Held at Museum of East Dorset.

Source: Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine, February 1917. Held at Museum of East Dorset.

Pamphill School. The children of this small School, encouraged as they have been by their teachers, have worked well for the sailors and soldiers for whom they have done a quantity of knitting. They have raised no less than £3 15s. 6d. for various war funds and "days." They have contributed "kitchen goods" for the Belgian refugees, and have brought from time to time eggs, vegetables and waste paper. And in the autumn they gathered large quantities of acorns which were sold to a farmer in the district, and, with the money gained, cigarettes and matches were purchased and sent as a Christmas gift to the wounded soldiers at the Red Cross Infirmary.

Pamphill School. The girls are making bags for the wounded. The boys, not to be out-a-done by their sisters, are, at their own suggestion, knitting scarves for the soldiers during their play time and when at home.

Source: Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine, May 1918. Held at Museum of East Dorset.

Read the articles carefully.

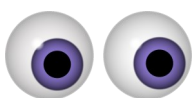
- ⇒ Which articles of clothing have the Pamphill School children knitted? Do you know what all these items are?
- ⇒ Who were The G.F.S. (Girls' Friendly Society) and why was the society set up?
- ⇒ What activities, other than knitting, are the children taking part in?

- Children were rewarded with special certificates in recognition of their contribution to care packages which were sent out to the soldiers.



Source: WIMPH 1997.131.1

This Christmas Day Certificate from The Overseas Club was awarded in 1915 to children for providing soldiers and sailors with such comforts as hand knitted items for Christmas.



Look carefully at the design of the certificate.

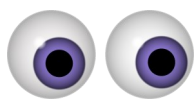
What was The Overseas Club?

- ⇒ There are shields along the top of the certificate for Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Newfoundland and India. Why are these countries mentioned in particular?
- ⇒ What does the picture of the men and children depict in the bottom left-hand corner?
- ⇒ The certificate has a border which is made up of the leaf and berries from a certain plant. Why do you think this plant has been used for this certificate?
- ⇒ The certificate contains the words "Honour, Freedom and Justice." Consider why these words were used.
- ⇒ Can you spot the "seal" of The Overseas Club?



Source: WIMPH 1997.131.2

This gift certificate was awarded on Empire Day in 1915 to school children for providing sailors and soldiers with knitted comforts. Again, it shows the shields of the countries in the Empire and the seal of the Overseas Club is in the bottom right corner.



Again, look at the imagery used in the design of this certificate.

What was Empire Day and when did it take place each year?

- ⇒ Can you spot Britannia? (Hint: she is still shown on some of our coins and money today.) She is the symbol of the British Isles. Why do you think she is depicted on this certificate behind the soldier and the sailor?
- ⇒ There is a soldier and a sailor with weapons on the left-hand side of the certificate, and a mother and her children on the right-hand side. What message does this send to you? How does it make you feel?

Did you know?

The Overseas Club was founded by a man called Sir Evelyn Wrench in 1910, a few years before the outbreak of the First World War. It began with just 300 members.

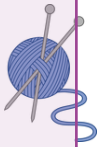
During the war, the club was committed to supporting the war effort, in particular, fundraising for comforts for the troops.

By the end of the war in 1918, the club's membership had risen to 15,000.

Activity Ideas:

- ⇒ **Using one of the “My First Knitting Sets” in the accompanying activity box, if you have it, have a go at knitting something yourself.**

Is it easy to do or do you find it difficult? Do you think the girls were quite skilful for such a young age?



- ⇒ **Have a go at writing a newspaper article for a local paper about some of the achievements of the children in the First World War.**

Think about their contributions to the war effort and the type of language you would use in the article.



- ⇒ **Consider all the design techniques and imagery used in the two Overseas Club Gift Certificates.**

Now have a go at designing your own certificates. Think about the messages you want to convey, the images you would use, the colours, the layout and so on.



The certificate you design doesn't have to be for knitting comforts; it can be for any of the other war work children did, like acorn collecting, berry picking etc.

- ⇒ **Do some research and find out a bit more about the care packages which were sent to soldiers at the Front at Christmas time in World War 1.**

For example, how did the scheme develop, who started it, what did the care packages contain and do we still send similar packages today?

Consider the following poem, written by a lady called Jessie Pope during the First World War.

SOCKS

Shining pins that dart and click
In the fireside's sheltered peace
Check the thoughts that cluster thick -
20 plain and then decrease.

He was brave - well, so was I -
Keen and merry, but his lip
Quivered when he said good-bye -
Purl the seam-stitch, purl and slip.

Never used to living rough,
Lots of things he'd got to learn;
Wonder if he's warm enough -
Knit 2, catch 2, knit 1, turn.

Hark! The paper-boys again!
Wish that shout could be suppressed;
Keeps one always on the strain -
Knit off 9, and slip the rest.

Wonder if he's fighting now,
What he's done an' where he's been;
He'll come out on top, somehow -
Slip, knit 2, purl 14.

What activity is the writer doing while she sits by the fireside and thinks? How do we know?

Who is she thinking about?

List the emotions that you think she is feeling?

Why do you think she dreads hearing the paper-boys?

Does the poem end on a positive note?

Activity Idea: Think about the emotion which is conveyed in this poem. Now, think about one aspect of the First World War from a child's point of view and have a go at writing a poem about it.



Donations & Fundraising



- Children were tasked with raising money for the war effort. They did this in many ways and through a number of different schemes.

Why did children need to raise money for the war effort?



- The children of East Dorset were very generous in their donations to and support of various charities, as we can see from school logbooks.

WOODLANDS SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 20 Oct. 1914 - The children collected 7/- amongst themselves to send to Princess Mary for her fund for sailors and soldiers Christmas presents.
- 9 Dec. 1915 - Through the children's efforts £1-6-0 was sent to Lord Roberts Memorial Fund and 6/5 as Christmas gifts to wounded soldiers.
- 24 May. 1916 - Empire Day morning singing songs, procession round the common and talk about Army and Navy. Children sent 8/6 to Overseas Club for purchasing tobacco for soldiers.
- 19 Oct. 1916 - School granted days holiday the occasion being Red Cross collecting Day.
- 27 Nov. 1917 - Children sent 6/- to Overseas Club for tobacco.
- 4 Jan. 1918 - Children collected £2 for Sir Arthur Pearson's Fund for Blinded Soldiers.

Source: DHC S-141/2/2

VERWOOD NATIONAL SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 28 May. 1918 - Empire Day collection for tobacco for the soldiers amounted to £1-2-7 sent to Overseas Club.
- 25 Jul. 1918 - Children collected for Sir Arthur Pearson's Fund for Blinded Soldiers sum of £1-8-5 ½.
- 24 Sep. 1918 - Children took part in procession through the village in aid of Red Cross fund, many of them being dressed in fancy costumes.
- 27 Sep. 1918 - Holiday given today in recognition of the children's help towards fund of Red Cross Society.

Source: DHC S-225/2/3

SHAPWICK SCHOOL LOGBOOK

- 21 May 1915 - Vicar gave a short address on Empire. 7/- given towards Empire Day Penny Fund by the Overseas Club.
- 24 May 1916 - Empire Day. Vicar gave a short address on Empire. 7/½ given towards Empire Day Penny Fund by the Overseas Club.
- 1 Dec. 1916 - 7/- was given by the children on 29th Nov to provide Xmas gifts for soldiers and sailors and forwarded to Overseas Club.

Source: DHC S-12/2/2

How many different funds, collections and charities can you count in these 3 logbook extracts alone? Do you recognise the names of any of them? Do any of them still exist today?

How did children raise money for the war effort?

WAR SAVINGS ASSOCIATION

- Many schools joined the War Savings Association when it began in 1916, which raised money through the sale of *National Savings Certificates*.
- These cost 15 shillings and 6 pence each (which is around £50 in today's money), but you didn't have to buy them all in one go.
- You had a card onto which you could stick 6d (sixpence) "savings stamps."
- When the card was full and the total reached 15/6d (15 shillings and 6 pence) it could be exchanged for a certificate.
- After 5 years, this certificate could be cashed in for £1.
- On a set day of the week, teachers would collect cash from the children in exchange for savings certificates.

School Logbooks show that this form of fundraising was embraced by local children.

SIXPENNY HANDLEY SCHOOL LOGBOOK

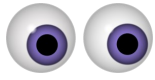
29 Jan. 1917 - Colonel H A Cartwright visited re War Savings Certificates.

9 Feb. 1917 - Quite a lot of children are investing their savings in War Loan.

12 Jul. 1917 - H W Irvine Esq called to see me re starting a War Savings Association in the parish. He suggested that Rev. Bruce be the Treasurer and that I should take the Secretaryship. I promised to bring the matter before the managers at Monday's meeting.

Below are some examples of original National War Savings Stamps held in the collection at the Museum of East Dorset. (WIMPH 1994.17)

They are from series of stamps called "War in the Air", "Women's War Work" and "V.C. Series."

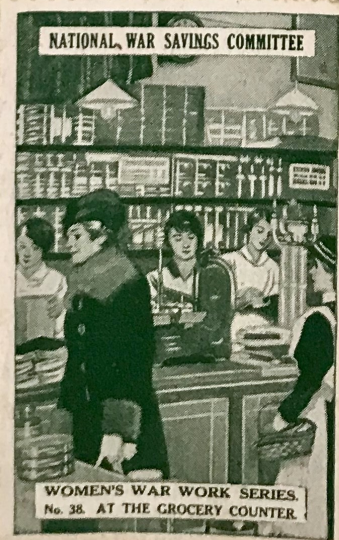
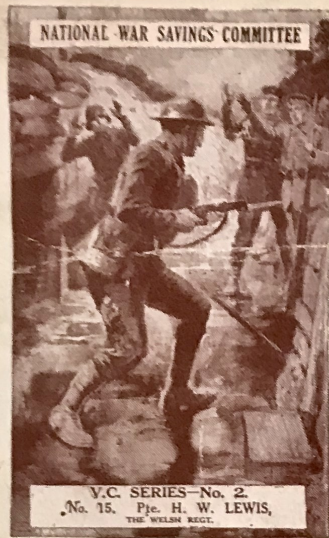


*Look carefully at the images on the stamps and their design.
Can you explain the activity in each of the pictures?*

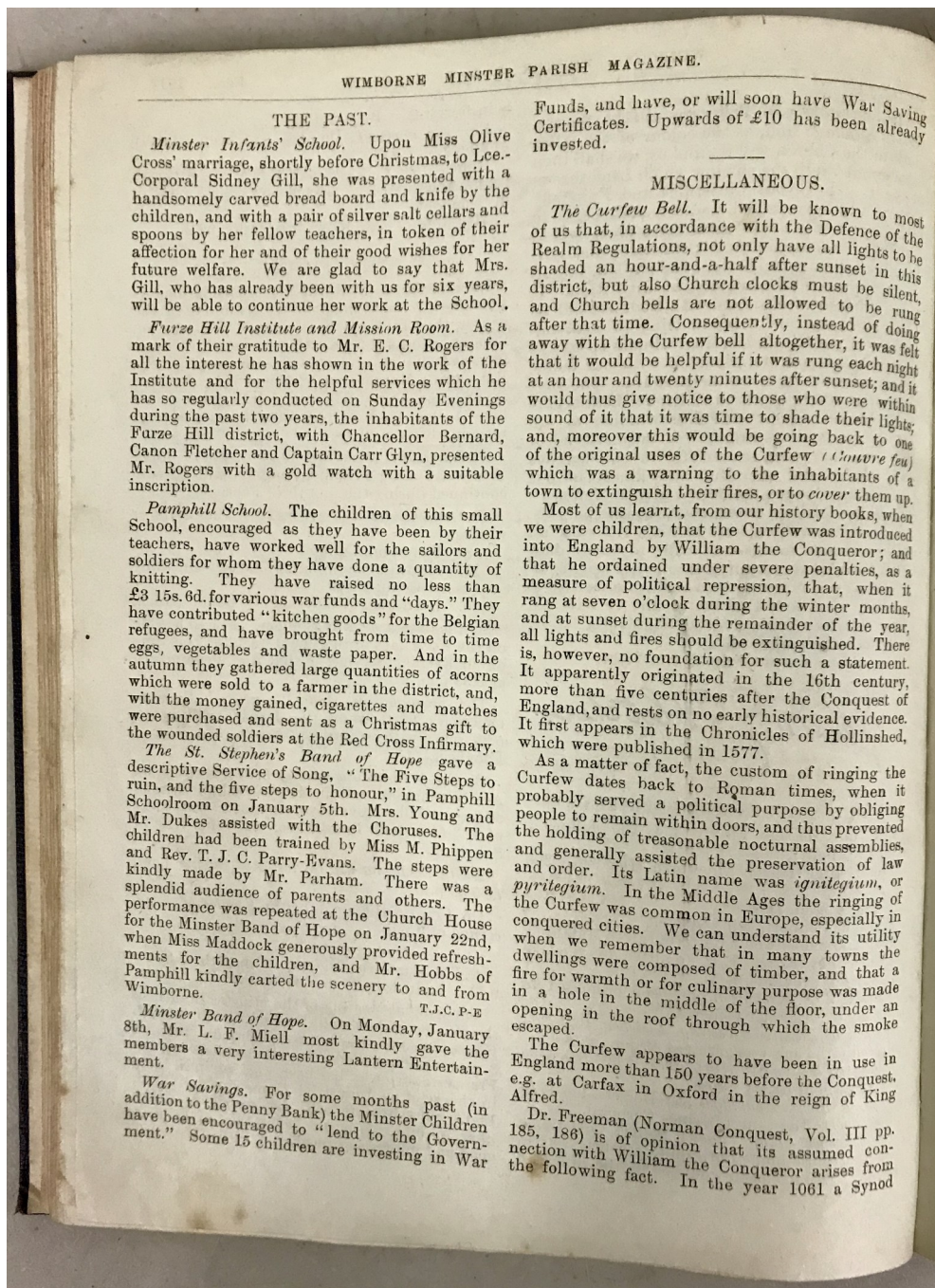








There was a short article which appeared in the Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine in February 1917. It gives an indication of how successful "War Savings" were with the children. Can you spot it? How much money had already been invested at that time?



FLAG DAYS

- “Flag Days” were held to make money for all types of wartime projects, war work and charities, such as building warships, helping wounded soldiers and even helping wounded war horses.
- Children would sell small flags or badges that people could pin to their coats to show their support, a bit like a poppy today.



These original First World War lapel flags are held in the collection of the Museum of East Dorset. (WIMPH 2017.85)

Study them carefully and look at their design.

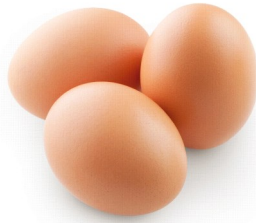
The flag consists of the red and white cross of St George with a British “Union Jack” flag in the top left corner. The head and shoulders figure of a wounded British soldier is on the right side of the flag. These flags were sold to raise money for the British Red Cross.

Activity Idea:

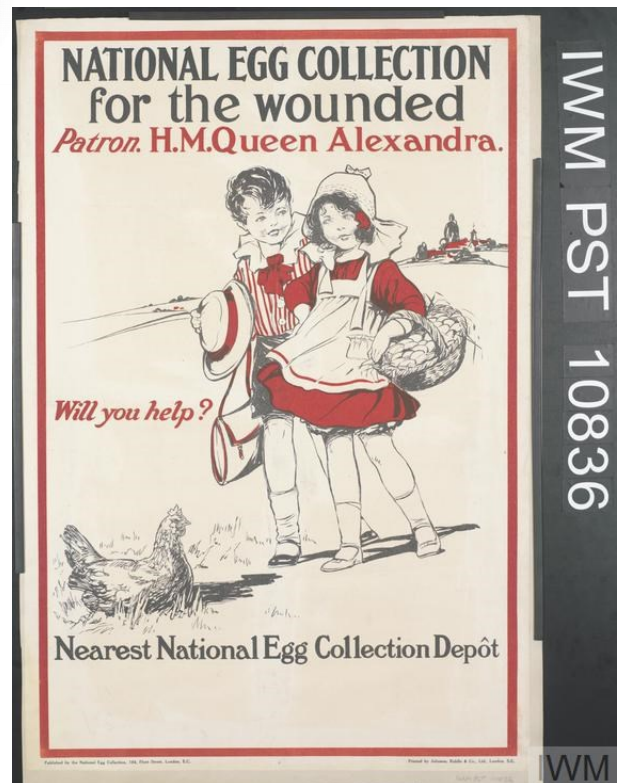
Consider all the many charities and good causes which children raised money for in the First World War.

- ⇒ Now, design your own lapel flag out of paper or cardboard. Choose a charity or good cause, such as the Blue Cross Fund which helped wounded war horses, and think about how you would depict this on the flag.

Eggs



- Posters were put up encouraging people to collect hens' eggs to feed wounded soldiers. This was a cause which the children of East Dorset took seriously.
- Boys and girls both helped with this job. Many homes, especially in the rural villages, kept chickens during the war, and therefore had a good supply of fresh eggs.

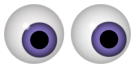


Source: Imperial War Museum

Did you know?

- ⇒ The **National Egg Collection** was launched in November 1914 by Frederick Carl, who was the editor of the magazine *Poultry World*. At first, the idea was to provide 20,000 newly laid eggs a week to the wounded soldiers in a hospital in Boulogne, France. This target was easily reached by Easter 1915. (www.ww1centenary.oucs.ox.ac.uk)
- ⇒ The following year, the target was increased to 1 million eggs a week.
- ⇒ Special boxes and labels were supplied and free transport was provided by the railways.
- ⇒ There were over 2000 depots run by local groups and churches. One of our local depots was located at the Dorset County Stores in Wimborne Town Centre.
- ⇒ Donors were encouraged to write their name and address on the eggs with a message for the wounded. If they were lucky, they might get a reply thanking them. These messages were known as “eggograms.”

- The article below, from the Wimborne Minster Parish Magazine of May 1915, describes the success of local schoolchildren in collecting fresh eggs for the wounded.



Fresh Eggs for the Wounded. The response to the appeal for eggs has been an encouraging one. In addition to their weekly contributions of eggs, on their special "Children's Days," the Minster School children brought more than twenty-two dozen eggs. About the same number came from the Boys' School; and four dozen were sent by the Pamphill children. Up to date 2062 eggs in all have been sent to the depôt at the Dorset County Stores, where our grateful thanks are due to Mr. Sidney Munckton for so kindly placing his room at our disposal, and to Mr. Henville for all the trouble he has taken in packing, &c.

Amongst those who have been actively working in the way of organisation and collection of eggs in this neighbourhood, we ought especially to mention Miss K. Belgrave and Miss Linda Street.

- ⇒ Why do you think eggs in particular were chosen to be sent to the wounded soldiers?
- ⇒ Why do you think this campaign was so successful?
- ⇒ How many eggs are in a dozen?

Activity Idea:

Included in the activity pack are some egg templates which you can photocopy and cut out.

- ⇒ Write an "eggogram" message to a wounded soldier on an egg.
Think carefully about what you might say. For instance, would you thank them for their efforts or would you tell them about your home-life?

Boy Scouts



Source: MED OUT-111

- The above photograph is of the bugle band of the 1st Wimborne Scout Troop. It was taken in 1919, just after the war, when they were at camp in Mudeford.
- Although the photo was taken the year after the First World War ended, these boys would have been heavily involved in war work throughout the course of the conflict.

What is "chivalrous behaviour?"

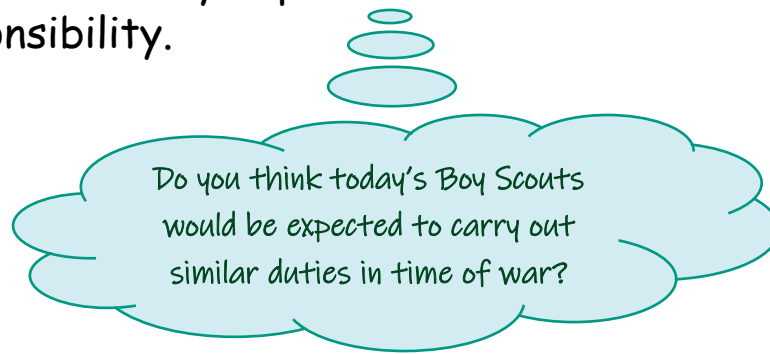
Did you know?

The **Boy Scout Movement** was founded in Great Britain in 1908 by Lieutenant General Robert Baden-Powell, who had written a book called *Scouting for Boys* (1908). The aim was to develop the boys in good citizenship, chivalrous behaviour and skill in various outdoor activities.

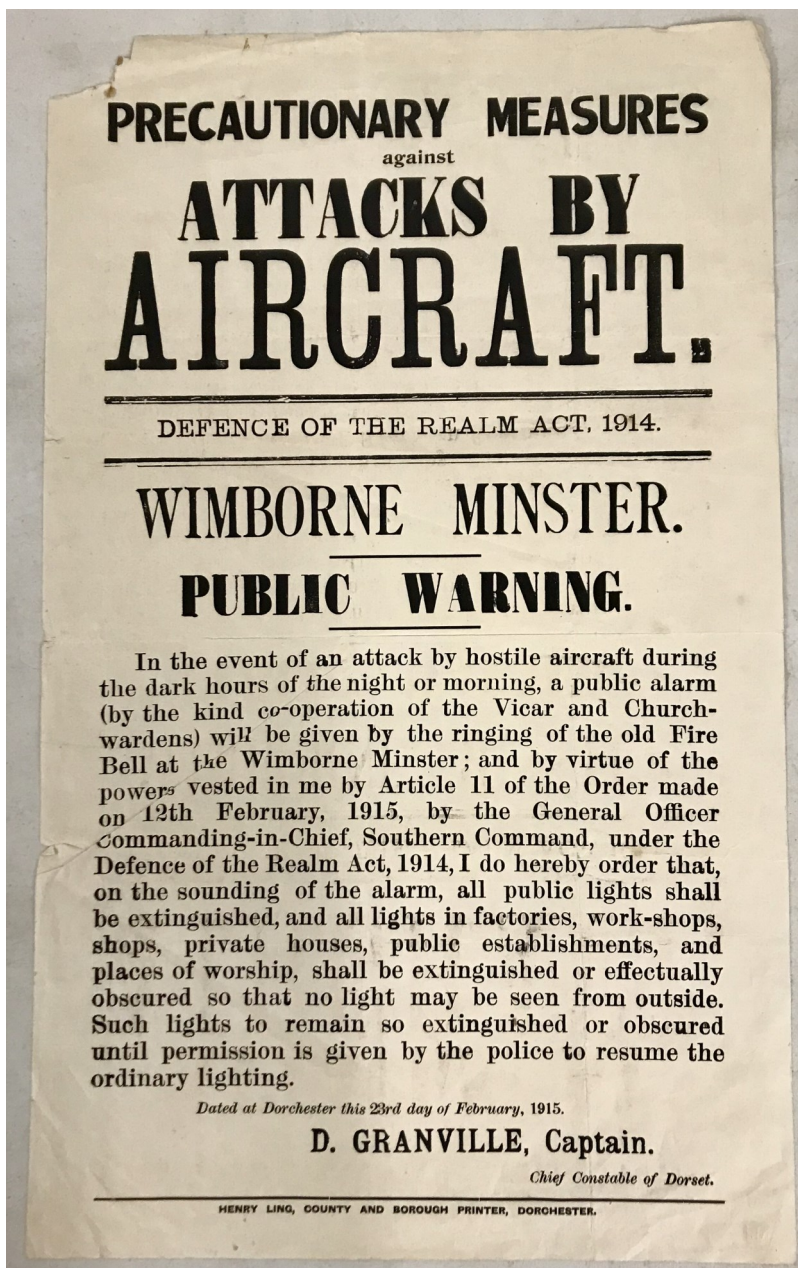
- ⇒ Baden-Powell wanted the boys to organise themselves into small groups of six or seven under a boy leader. Their training would consist of such things as tracking and reconnaissance, mapping, signalling, knotting, first aid, and all the skills that arise from camping and similar outdoor activities. To become a scout, a boy would promise to be loyal to his country, help other people and, in general, obey the scout law.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica)

- During the war, it can be said that the Boy Scouts were treated like mini-soldiers on the home front. The authorities called on them to undertake many important war duties which carried quite a lot of responsibility.



- These duties included: patrolling the coast, checking permits, keeping watch for invasion, guarding railway stations and bridges, guarding telephone lines, carrying messages, air-raid duties, sounding the 'All Clear' with their bugles and helping with the harvest and other agricultural work.



This "Public Warning" poster was displayed around Wimborne in 1915.

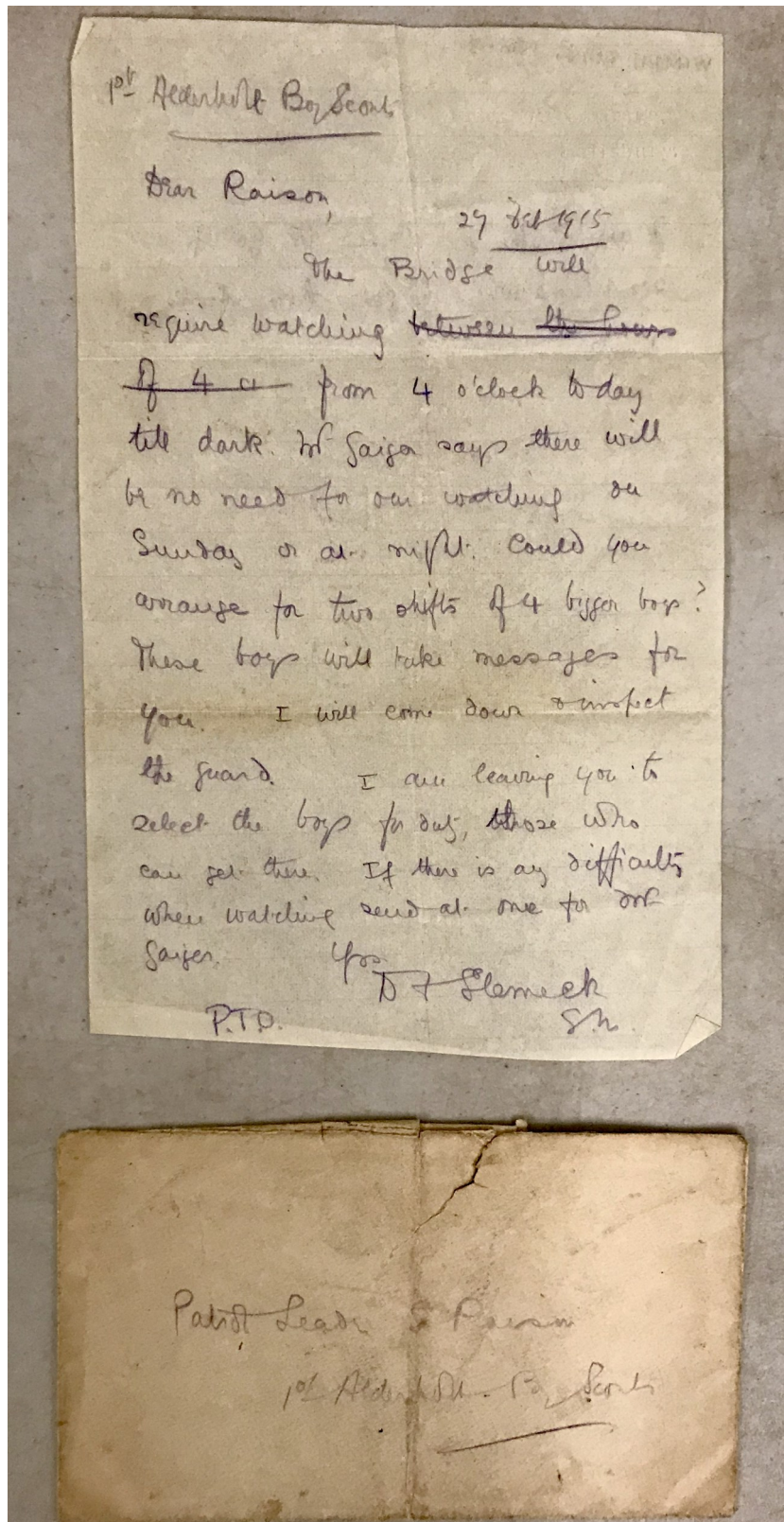
Read it carefully.

- ⇒ What is the purpose of the poster? What is it warning against?
- ⇒ What does the Chief Constable of Dorset advise everybody to do in the event of this happening? Why?
- ⇒ Find out about the Defence of the Realm Act 1914. What was it?

Activity Idea:

Make your own "Public Warning Poster"

- In actual fact, the town of Wimborne Minster never experienced an air raid during the First World War. The fact that this poster was created though tells us that an air raid was considered a real threat.
- Therefore, local Boy Scout troops were drafted in to help with air raid spotting and guarding bridges, which would have been a prime target.



This letter, still with its original envelope, is dated 27th February 1915. It was written by the Scoutmaster, Mr D. Slembeck, to Mr Raison, the patrol leader of the 1st Alderholt Boy Scouts.

Can you read the writing?

⇒ What is the Scoutmaster asking the Patrol Leader to organise?

⇒ Why does he want him to do this?

This is a transcript of the letter, which you may find easier to read.

1st Alderholt Boy Scouts

29 Feb 1915

Dear Raïson,

The Bridge will require watching ~~between the hours of 4 o' from~~ 4 o'clock today till dark. Mr Gaiger says there will be no need for our watching on Sunday or at night. Could you arrange for two shifts of 4 bigger boys? These boys will take messages for you. I will come down & inspect the guard.

I am leaving you to select the boys for duty, those who can get there. If there is any difficulty when watching send out one for Mr Gaiger.

Yours

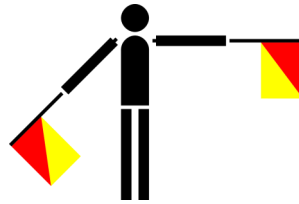
D T Slemeck.

Although not local, the photograph below gives an idea of what the scouts may have looked like while guarding the bridge.



Boy scouts on guard by a railway bridge and train tracks in the United Kingdom during the First World War.

(IWM Q30604)



- Boy scouts were also expected to learn semaphore. Semaphore is the use of small handheld flags to send messages.
- The signaller holds the flags in specific positions, or angles to the body, which correspond to different letters of the alphabet or numbers. They can thereby spell out words and send messages to a receiver some distance away.
- Semaphore was particularly used at sea before the invention of radio.



Above is a picture of "The Semaphore Simplified" training cards which were used to train signallers during the First World War. They are held in the collection of the Imperial War Museum. (EPH 2936)

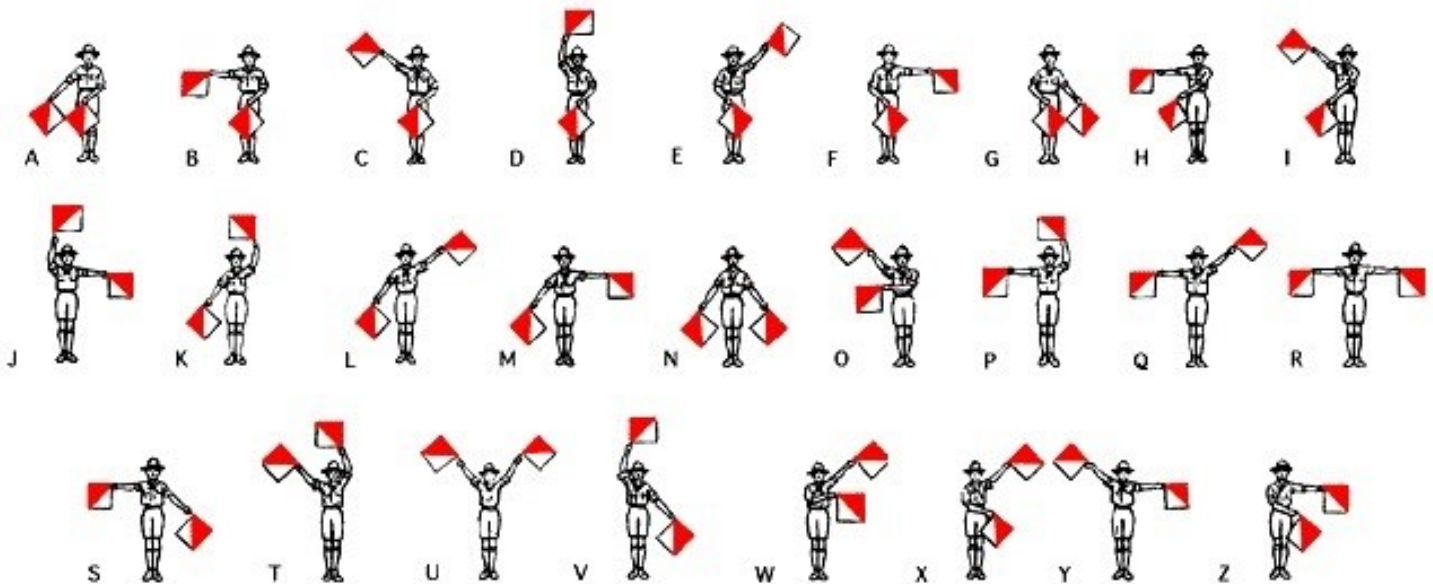


Source: IWM Q19994

Here is another photograph from the collection of the Imperial War Museum.

It shows two sea scouts using semaphore near the coast.

Notice how one boy is the signaller while the other writes down the message.



Activity Ideas:

- ⇒ **Discuss:** Do you think semaphore was useful to the boy scouts? Was it an efficient way of sending messages? What were its advantages and disadvantages?
- ⇒ Have a go at making your own semaphore flags out of paper or cardboard.
- ⇒ Research the semaphore alphabet further and, using your own flags or the ones provided in the activity box, have a go at sending simple messages to each other across the playground or hall.
- ⇒ See if you can devise your own way of sending simple messages over a distance.

Girl Guides



Source: MED WIT-186

Above is a photo of some local girl guides taken in the First World War.

- As with the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides also took on many important job roles during the First World War.
- They made, collected and packaged up clothing for soldiers to be sent to the Front. They kept allotments to help cope with food shortages. They helped deliver milk, helped in hospitals and learnt first-aid. They also helped with administration in war offices and learnt semaphore.

Did you know?

Robert Baden-Powell and his sister, Agnes Baden-Powell, founded the Girl Guides in Great Britain in 1910 in response to the requests of girls who were interested in the Boy Scout movement.

Oral History - An Interview with Daisy Perrott.

Oral History is the recording of people's memories, experiences and opinions. It is:

- a living history of everyone's unique life experiences.
- An opportunity for those people who have been 'hidden from history' to have their voice heard.
- A rare chance to talk about and record history face-to-face.
- A source of new insights and perspectives that may challenge our view of the past.

Oral History Society: www.ohs.org.uk

- To the right is a picture of Daisy. She is the little girl standing with a hat covering her boots. (She couldn't be bothered to do her boots up for the photo, so she covered them with her aunt's big hat!) With her are her aunt and younger brother.
- Daisy was born during the Edwardian era in 1907, so she was aged between 7 and 11 years old during the First World War.
- Although not local to East Dorset, (she grew up in London), she had many memories and experiences of the First World War.
- In 1988, Daisy's granddaughter interviewed her about her experiences of World War 1 for a history project.



Photo courtesy of Mrs C Brough



- ⇒ Listen to the interview which can be found on the memory stick in the activity box or on the Museum of East Dorset's Soundcloud account at <https://soundcloud.com/museumofeastdorset/tracks>
- ⇒ The interview can be listened to either as one whole piece or as a series of separate questions.

Answer the questions on the template provided in the activity pack.

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATIONS & ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- ⇒ **Both the interview with Daisy and the Conquerers role-play scenario mention Lord Kitchener.** Find out who Lord Kitchener was and what role he played in the First World War.
- ⇒ **We have looked at the many ways in which children contributed to the war effort outside of the home in World War 1.** Find out about the type of jobs and household chores they would have been expected to do **inside** the home. (e.g. looking after siblings, making the fire, cleaning etc.) How do they differ to the domestic chores we have to do today? Have a go at miming or acting out some of these activities and see if your classmates can guess what you're doing.
- ⇒ **Conduct an interview with an older member of your family or a friend.** Ask them about their experiences as a child or if they lived through any momentous moments in history. How do they differ to your experiences?
- ⇒ **Develop and act out a role-play scenario involving children in the First World War.** Consider their experiences and emotions.
- ⇒ **Consider the differences between the jobs the boys were expected to do and those of the girls.** Would this be the same today?
- ⇒ **In her interview, Daisy talks about reciting a poem off by heart as her party piece.** See if you can learn a poem by heart and recite it to your friends.

Resources Used and Further Reading Suggestions

Websites

- www.iwm.org.uk (Imperial War Museum)
- www.rosl.org.uk (Royal Overseas League)
- www.thirdsector.co.uk/1914-1918
- www.britannica.co.uk

School Logbooks held at:

- Dorset History Centre, DT1 1RP
- Sixpenny Handley School, SP5 5NJ
- The Museum of East Dorset, BH21 1HR

Photographs provided courtesy of:

- The Priest's House Museum Trust trading as Museum of East Dorset.
- Imperial War Museum Collection
- Mrs C. Brough (photograph of Daisy Perrott)

Permission to use recording of interview given by R. Vivian.

Books:

- "Britain's Heritage: Children in the First World War" by Mike Brown. Published by Amberley Publishing 2017.
- "Scars upon my heart: Women's poetry and verse of the First World War" selected by Catherine Reilly. Published by Virago Press Ltd 1981.