

# War Poets Collection



## Teachers Notes

The resources in this education pack have been produced to encourage development in skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils at levels D-F of the 5-14 Environmental Studies; Social Subjects Guidelines.

These education packs can be used in the classroom, at home or used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition. They inspire individual as well as group work and include suggestions for further fun, engaging activities.

This resource pack contains:

- An interactive game, to be completed online
- Two accompanying PDF worksheets for student use

A more detailed breakdown of each of these resources, including suggestions for additional fun or stimulating activities, discussions and further links is included below.

### Sweet Dreams

This fun, interactive game is aimed at pupils at level D of the 5-14 Environmental Studies; Social Subjects Guidelines for people in the past and people in society, but can also be a fun activity for those at levels E-F.

K&U Strands: Change and Continuity, cause and effect, Time and Historical Sequence, People and needs in Society.

Skills Strands: Carrying out tasks, IT

A patient at Craiglockhart Military Hospital is lying in bed and trying to sleep. He was told by the nurses that counting sheep would help him. Your pupils have to answer questions on Craiglockhart, the First World War and shell shock. If they get an answer wrong, the patient wakes up with one of his shell-shock nightmares, if they get an answer right, the patient counts sheep and sleeps soundly.

As well as developing IT skills, your pupils will engage directly with the symptoms of shell shock and the reality of its effects on an officer of the First World War. Based at Craiglockhart, your pupils will begin to understand the changes in the uses of the building, now a university campus with a War Poets Exhibition, but in 1917 a hospital for patients of shell shock.

### AWOL

This fun, interactive letter game is aimed at pupils at levels E-F of the 5-14 Environmental Studies; Social Subjects Guidelines for people in the past and people in society.

K&U Strands: Change and continuity, cause and effect, Time and Historical Sequence, The nature of historical evidence, People and needs in society, Conflict and decision making in society  
Skills Strands: Preparing for tasks, Carrying out tasks, IT

Letter writing was an important aspect of life for soldiers on the Front. Not only was it a good pastime, but it kept the soldiers up-to-date with what was happening at home, with their families and loved ones.

Soldiers would spend a few days or weeks at a time on the front line, then periods at rest, behind the line, in the support trenches. It was normally in their rest periods that they would write their letters.

The letter featured in this worksheet was written by a soldier called John Henry ('Jack') Carmichael, to his mother, Williamina on 4th August 1917. Jack wrote many letters home to his family at Craiglockhart from the trenches in France.

Jack's grandfather was the Head Gardener at Craiglockhart and his family were tenants there for many years. You can find out more about the Carmichael family and their connection to Craiglockhart on the War Poets Collection webpages.

Some of the words in Jack's letter are 'absent without leave', pupils have to select the correct words from the 'word trench' and drop them into the correct spaces to complete the letter so his mother knows what to send him.

### **Writing Home – 1**

This PDF worksheet is aimed at pupils of at levels E-F of the 5-14 Environmental Studies; Social Subjects Guidelines for people in the past and people in society.

K&U Strands: Change and continuity, cause and effect, Time and Historical Sequence, The nature of historical evidence, People and needs in society, Conflict and decision making in society.  
Skills Strands: Preparing for tasks, Carrying out tasks, Reviewing and reporting on tasks.

The letter featured in this worksheet was written by John Henry ('Jack') Carmichael, to his mother, Williamina on 4th August 1917. Jack wrote many letters home to his family, at Craiglockhart, from the trenches in France.

Your pupils have to answer a number of questions, based on a close reading of Jack's letter. One of the questions is a little more tricky and touches on bias and propaganda, encouraging them to consider the reliability of the information written in contemporary newspapers. This should introduce your pupils to the importance of primary sources of evidence in understanding the past.

After a close reading, your pupils have to put themselves in Jack's soggy boots and try to write his next letter home. Will he try to stay cheery – despite the uncomfortable conditions in the trenches – or tell his

mother how awful it all is? This exercise is good stimulus for writer's craft and empathising with an individual living in the past.

## **Writing Home – 2**

This PDF worksheet is aimed at pupils of at levels D-E of the 5-14 Environmental Studies; Social Subjects Guidelines for people in the past and people in society.

K&U Strands: Change and continuity, cause and effect, Time and Historical Sequence, The nature of historical evidence, People and needs in society, Conflict and decision making in society.

Skills Strands: Preparing for tasks, Carrying out tasks, Reviewing and reporting on tasks.

The letter featured in this worksheet was written by John Henry ('Jack') Carmichael, to his mother, Williamina on 16th October 1917. Jack wrote many letters home to his family, at Craiglockhart, from the trenches in France. In this particular letter he is thanking his mother for the parcel she sent. Parcels of food, clothing and other home comforts were always greatly appreciated by soldiers on the front.

Your pupils have to answer a few simple questions, based on information in Jack's letter and then try to empathise with his situation and help him write a cheery postcard home to 'wee Jimmie'. Postcards, like letters, were also very popular during the First World War.

This worksheet introduces the importance of evidence in understanding the past and also encourages your pupils to empathise with individuals living in the past.

## **Activities**

### **Postcard pictures**

Postcards were very popular during the First World War. Perhaps your pupils could cut out the postcard from the **Writing Home – 2** worksheet and draw a picture for the front. You could try to get them to imagine the scenes in the rural villages of France, where the soldiers would have been based.

### **Shell shock**

The final question in the **Sweet Dreams** interactive game asks how patients suffering from shell shock were treated. Although electricity was not used to treat patients at Craiglockhart, passive dream analysis was and both methods were used to try to treat patients of shell shock. At this time, the medical community were baffled by the condition and tried various techniques to try to cure the patients of their uncontrollable shaking and other symptoms.

The War Poets Collection Exhibition at Napier University includes a film showing the different kinds of symptoms of patients suffering from shell shock.

## **In Memorium**

Almost every small town and village in Britain has some sort of monument erected to commemorate the tragic loss of young lives from the First World War. You could perhaps take your class, or encourage your pupils to go and find your local monument. Ask them to look for the names and ages of the soldiers who fell. Perhaps they can see names just like their own in the death roll.

## **Discussions**

### **Truth or how dare they?!**

In **Writing Home – 1**, Jack Carmichael writes in a letter to his family:

*"What do you think of the War now? It looks as if Germany is getting a bit fed up by this time if one can believe the papers. Anyway, I hope he throws in the sponge soon, as we are getting a bit fed up out here."*

A stimulating discussion might be the question of how reliable the press was in wartime? Why do you think the newspapers told heroic, glorious stories? Do you think the German newspapers reported the same heroic stories? What is the purpose of propaganda?

### **War, over and out, or still firing on all cylinders?!**

Discuss the importance of commemorating war in the past. On 11th November (Armistice Day) we remember those who fell in the First World War. But we also try to ensure such a waste of life is not repeated. Is this the case? As the television and news is full of war and death, have we really learned our lesson?

## **Further Links**

### **The War Poets at Craiglockhart**

A number of John Henry ('Jack') Carmichael's letters feature in this education pack. More information about the Carmichael family's connection to Craiglockhart can be found on this website. It also contains detailed information about the War Poets, the medical staff and treatments for shell shock at Craiglockhart and in the First World War. <http://sites.scran.ac.uk/Warp/index.htm>

### **Schools - World War One**

This BBC website includes activities, videos and animations help develop themes introduced in this education pack and further the educational opportunity for studying World War 1.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/>

### **The First World War: Sources for History**

The Imperial War Museum has an excellent website providing a unique and richly-varied source of materials including posters, letters and official documents to set the First World War in its historical context. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/index.htm>