

In 2014 The Museum of Richmond received an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund to research the story of the First World War in Richmond borough. This research resulted in an exhibition, *Richmond at Home and at War*, running from August 2014 to April 2015 at the museum, before going on tour.

With so many excellent resources being developed nationally, Museum of Richmond has developed resources to enable schools and students to explore the local impact of national and international events.

These teachers notes, accompanying Powerpoint, and digital files accessible via the blog (images, sound files, movies) can be used to inspire cross-curricular work and class enquiries. The *Object in Focus* worksheets can be printed off for pupils to use in individual or group work. Activity suggestions and links to related resources are included. Loan boxes including original and replica objects are also available to support further learning.



**MUSEUM of
RICHMOND**



THE RIVER AT RICHMOND

Background Notes

Throughout the 19th century powerful European nations had been developing global empires. Russia ruled countries in the Baltics including Estonia, parts of Poland and across central Asia, such as Kazakhstan. Austria-Hungary's empire stretched across central Europe, including Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia and the Czech Republic) and Bosnia. Germany had unified in 1871, out of smaller kingdoms like Prussia and Bavaria. The new nation had taken over countries in Africa including parts of modern Kenya and Rwanda. On the edge of Europe, the Ottoman Empire had taken control of most of the Middle East and had reached into Greece. The French empire included Viet Nam in East Asia, French Guiana in South America, and Morocco and Senegal in North-east Africa. The largest empire was ruled by Britain [Slide 1], from Australia, New Zealand, and India (Bangladesh and Pakistan), to Canada, Jamaica, South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, and Ireland.

At the start of the 20th century, competition between the European empires was creating tension. And smaller countries like Serbia and Belgium were worried they might be overrun by the empires. This led countries across Europe to form alliances [Slide 2]; political agreements to stand up for each other if they were attacked.

As well as this, there were growing demands for independence from countries that had already been taken over by the empires, for example, South Africa, India, Ireland, Greece, Bosnia.

In June 1914, a Serbian nationalist assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and a war was declared between the two countries. Alliances were activated on both sides and by August 1914, much of Europe was at war. For imperial nations, this meant the countries they ruled outside of Europe were also brought into the conflict and the First World War began. The two sides in the war were known as the **Central Powers**, the side headed by Austria-Hungary, Germany and the Ottoman Empire and the **Allies**, headed by France, Russia, and Britain [Slide 3].

The war was known at the time as the Great War, because of the scale and impact. It was the world's first Total War. The need to supply the armies with food, equipment, and weapons, as well as trying to care for the wounded and support the home economies, impacted the lives of everyone in the countries involved. The civilian populations in the countries where fighting was going on were also exposed to the risk of being killed in the fighting.

Key figures [Slide 4]:

Total number of men mobilized to fight	65 million
Total number killed	8.5 million
Number of wounded soldiers	21 million
Number of civilian casualties	6.8 million *
Total War Cost	\$186.3 billion

* The civilian casualties include people killed accidentally and purposely during the fighting (in air raids, for example), as well as those killed by disease and starvation. In the months following the end of the war as many as 50 million people around the world died in the Flu epidemic.

Britain in 1914

In 1914, Great Britain was no longer the world superpower. It had the largest navy and the largest empire (ruling 25% of the world's population), but it had been overtaken by Germany in industrial production. In Britain, this meant unemployment and poverty for some. (Some of the first men to sign up when war was announced were attracted as much by the promise of three meals a day as by patriotism.) There were strikes for better wages and demands were growing for equal votes for the poor and for women. For women, there were few employment opportunities and those who worked were usually servants or in low-paid factory jobs. There was a great divide between the classes in Britain, with a small upper class of wealthy and titled people who lived in luxury, a middle class of professionals like doctors and lawyers, and the lower classes (80% of the population) who had limited opportunities to improve their situation.

The speed limit was 20 miles per hour, but only the very rich could afford cars. Most people still lived in homes without electricity and with outside toilets. The new electric *kinemas* – cinema – were one of the most popular forms of entertainment, and food in tins was still a novelty.

Richmond

In 1914 Richmond [Slide 5] was a prosperous and comfortable area, to the southwest of London. The first Borough of Richmond was formed in 1890 and included the areas of Kew, Ham, Petersham and Mortlake. (The modern borough with Richmond, Barnes and Twickenham was formed in 1965.)

The area had been rural, mostly agricultural land, until the 18th century when large mansion houses began to be built, such as Pembroke Lodge and Ormeley Lodge in Ham [Slide 6]. During the 19th century, influenced by the new railway links to London, the population of the area began to grow. More spacious houses were built, particularly along the river, along with homes for the middle class professionals and the artisans and working class. This included England's first council houses, built in Manor Grove, North Sheen, in 1900.

The area remained a popular destination for visitors, and the Star and Garter Hotel [Slide 7] was a famous resort, before being re-opened as a war hospital. In the summer of 1914, Richmond was safe, prosperous, and busy with visitors to the river, to Kew Gardens [Slide 8] and to the rugby at Twickenham.

The local population was about 110,000. People worked in shops, hotels and restaurants. There were small factories, making things like boxes and glass bottles. There were butchers, postmen, cart drivers, and many worked as servants in the homes of the upper and middle classes.

Impacts of the war

One of the first impacts on the borough was the loss of men as they rushed to enlist. Next came the shortage of food and supplies in the shops. This was partly because the labour shortages affected agricultural production across Britain, and partly because the war at sea disrupted imports. By May 1917, food prices were almost twice that of July 1914 and rationing was eventually introduced in February 1918. Kew Gardens and Richmond Park were both dug for allotments [Slide 9] and in June 1917 the Richmond Communal Kitchen was opened on Clarence Street, as part of the national effort to save food and fuel. There were also air raids, which killed and wounded thousands of people across Britain.

Education had been made compulsory for all children in 1880 and in 1914 the school leaving age was 13. Children's education was disrupted as teachers left to enlist, first the men and later women, who could join the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and the Voluntary Aid Detachment, to serve as nurses and messengers. In the classroom many took part in activities to help the troops, including making knitting socks and respirator masks. The *Richmond & Twickenham Times* recorded in May 1915 that King's School, Kew, made 100 respirators for the War Office. The Girl Guides raised funds for wounded soldiers and boys' organisations like the scouts and sea scouts helped with military duties, such as guarding railways and communication lines. You can watch a short piece of Pathé film of Queen Amelia of Portugal, who lived in Richmond during the war, reviewing the guides in a military-style parade [Slide 10].

Women took on the jobs left by the enlisting men, including farming, delivering the mail, or as auxiliary police. Thousands worked in the factories, producing weapons and equipment. Not all men went away to fight, and many who stayed were in 'protected occupations', which were vital to keep the nation going. This included everything from coal miners, to engineers, to bakers. Richmond resident Muriel Wood was born in 1908 in Wales. In 2014 she shared some of her memories of the start of the war [Slide 11].

Object in Focus

This MBE medal (Member of the Order of the British Empire) belonged to Dorothy Hardy.

Dorothy was from Twickenham, the daughter of a well-known artist. She volunteered as a nurse during the First World War and helped wounded men in France and Germany. She was awarded the medal for this work.



Dorothy Hardy

The MBE medal was created in 1917 by the king, George V, to honour people who had served in non-combat roles during the war. It is silver, made by the jeweller Garrard. The medal is decorated with a picture of Britannia, a mythical figure representing Britain, and the motto 'For God and the Empire'.

Another local woman to be honoured was Sara Bonnell, who was born at 26 Mortlake Road, Kew. Sara joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and served with the Canadian Army Service Corps in France and Belgium driving ambulances. She won the Military Medal for her courage in collecting wounded men near St Omer while under fire for five hours. She said later;

"It wasn't a matter of courage. I was there to do something useful."

Women in the war

At home, women filled many of the roles left by men. For example, on 8 May 1915, *The Herald* reported that in Richmond

"The committee for the establishment of an organised police force has raised enough [money] to take on two ladies for two months on an experimental basis".

British society in 1914 was very much controlled by the British class system. It even affected where you volunteered. Many working class women ended up in the ammunition factories. It was dangerous work and several women were killed in explosions. Others were poisoned by the chemicals they used. Girls from wealthy families were encouraged to become nurses. It was thought their educated voices would be more comforting to the wounded men. But their work could be dangerous too, including driving ambulances to rescue wounded men.

In Richmond, an ammunition factory was established at the old water bottling plant on Princes Road, off Sheen Road. And several hospitals were opened including the Star and Garter hospital, the Officers hospital on Ham Common, and the South African hospital in Richmond Park.

Miss Mary H. Ward, a school nurse, was granted leave from her post for the duration of the war so that she could join the Territorial Force Nursing Service. However a letter in the *Richmond and Twickenham Times* complained that a recently-married young woman had offered to help at Richmond Red Cross Hospital but was rejected as only single ladies were thought suitable.

Suggested class activities

Use the background notes and slides provided to help pupils understand the nature of the First World War; the key facts and how so many countries came to be involved.

The *List of Countries* can be used to encourage class discussion about the countries involved.

Key Stage 3:

Ask pupils to choose a British Empire nation and investigate the contribution it made to the war, for example numbers of volunteers or resources sent in support. Some useful websites are listed in the **Resources** section below.

Learning points: This creates opportunities to begin exploring the impacts of the war within a global context and understand the connections between local, regional, national and international history.

Use the statistics provided for a class discussion the war. The numbers are staggering and thought provoking. Pupils can find related figures, for example the population of Britain at the time. Calculating percentages is a useful exercise in understanding the impact of the war.

Use the slides and information provided to explore what life was like for different people in Richmond in 1914 and to begin to explore how the war affected people at home. Additional resources are available on the Museum of Richmond blog site (see **Resources**).

The *Object in Focus* sheets can be printed off for pupils to use, supported by the slide images.

The sheets take key objects from the Museum of Richmond WWI collection and explore the different experiences and themes they represent. These can be read through as a class, discussing the objects and any new vocabulary, before moving on to individual or group work.

Women and the War: Dorothy Hardy's MBE [slides 20,21, 22 & 23] Most suitable for: Key Stage 3

Study of the medal can be used to stimulate discussion about the consequences of the war for the British Empire and its eventual decline. Reference to contemporary responses to the MBE can encourage reflection on the continuing impact of imperialism in modern post-colonial Europe.

Follow on

Find out more about the role of women in the war: You could use the suggested resources to look at the war from women's perspectives, perhaps developing this to write poetry; alternative voices to compare to the majority of famous war poetry, focusing on experiences of combat.

Write Dorothy's story: We know frustratingly little about Dorothy's life during the war, including the actions for which she was awarded the MBE. What was she thinking as she stood on the staircase? And who was the man sitting relaxed behind her? Where was he from? How did they know each other?

Learning points: Pupils can take a personal story as the starting point to explore change and continuity as a result of the war; for women and for countries under British rule. These areas encourage reflection on the continuing historical significance of the war and its contemporary legacies.

Resources

The impact of the war on the borough of Richmond is being traced through the Richmond at Home and at War blog: <http://richmondww1.wordpress.com/>

Using extracts from local newspapers, parish magazines, and casualty honour roles, regular War Diary articles follow the war through key international events and the impacts on local communities. Material will be added for the four years of the centenary, to include oral history recordings, film footage, photographs, documents, and newspaper extracts. Posts will also feature material created by local students in response to the war centenary, including poetry and animation.

Extracts from a war nurse's diary, read by volunteers:

https://archive.org/details/diary_nursing_sister_0911_librivox

Affects of the war on life for women:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z9bf9j6>

http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/womenww1_four.htm

<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/women-of-empire-in-wartime>

Film footage of a female munition worker's funeral:

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/munitioneers-funeral-impressive-scenes>

More information about Black & Asian soldiers in imperial armies:

<http://www.blackpresence.co.uk/remembrance-day-black-asian-soldiers-in-ww1/>

Article on a modern poet's refusal to accept an OBE:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/nov/27/poetry.monarchy>

General:

Britain in 1914; a short BBC film: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zm3n34j>

Interactive WWI timeline: <http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item107535.html>

World maps: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/maps/europe1914.htm>

Facts & statistics:

http://www.ww1commonwealthcontribution.org/WW1FSCCommonwealth_Contribution.html

<http://www.dw.de/africa-and-the-first-world-war/a-17573462>

<http://www.1914-1918.net/faq.htm>

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