

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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]:

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

\* 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 18<sup>th</sup> century when large mansion houses began to be built, such as Pembroke Lodge and Ormeley Lodge in Ham [Slide 6]. During the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

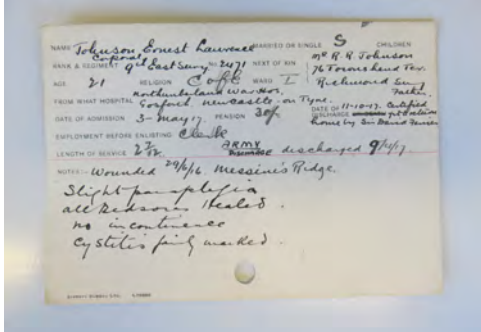
Education had been made compulsory for all children in 1880 and in 1914 the school leaving age was 13. Children's education was disrupted as teachers left to enlist, first the men and later women, who could join the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and the Voluntary Aid Detachment, to serve as nurses and messengers. 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 walking frame belonged to the Star & Garter Hospital.

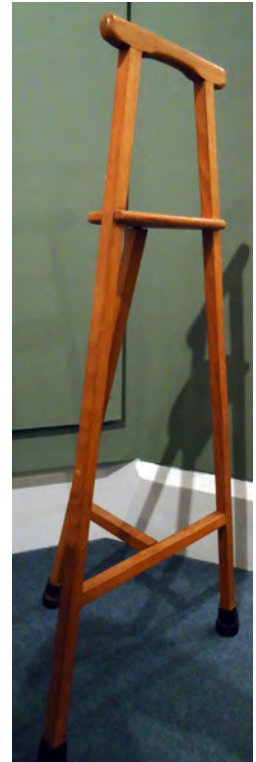
It was used during the First World War by soldiers recovering from their injuries. The hospital was in a converted hotel on the riverside in Richmond.



A patient record card

The frame is made of wood with rubber feet to stop it slipping. It is 93cm tall. Injured soldiers could lean on the frame to help them stand and walk.

Injured soldiers were first treated in field hospitals near the battlefields. Special hospitals were set up in England to help them recover from their injuries.



The Star & Garter Hospital kept records of all the patients who they treated. The note above details one soldier's disabilities;

*"Slight paraplegia, all bedsores healed, no incontinence."*

### Ernest Johnson

The patient was called Ernest Laurence Johnson.

The 1911 census lists Ernest living on Townsend Terrace, Richmond, with his father, Ernest Robert Johnson a builder and decorator, his mother Margaret Johnson, and eight brothers and sisters.

Ernest was born in 1896. Aged 16 on the 1911 census, he is identified as a student. In October 1914, he was one of the eager young men who volunteered on the steps of the Town Hall in Richmond. He joined the 9th East Surrey Regiment and was later promoted to the rank of Corporal.

Ernest was wounded at Messines Ridge, Flanders, on 29 June 1916. Men with minor injuries were treated and then returned to active service. As Ernest was severely wounded, he was discharged from the army on 9 April 1917. He was awarded an annual pension 30 shillings.

Ernest was admitted to the Star & Garter in October 1917, with a slight paraplegia caused by his wounds. Paraplegia is usually caused by an injury to the spine. Those suffering from paraplegia are unable to move their legs and lower body.

The Star & Garter aimed to help men learn to live with their disability, hopefully to live normal lives.

## 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.

Lower & Upper Key Stage 2:

As a class, pupils can suggest different countries and use the 'register' to find out how they were involved in the war.

*Learning points: Pupils often pick countries linked to their own background, and this creates opportunities to begin exploring the possible impacts of the war on their own family history and to position the local experience within a global context.*

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.

Disability: Ernest Johnson's record [slides 24,25, 26 & 27] Most suitable for: Key Stage 2

Study of the frame and patient record can be used to encourage pupils to consider how individuals and society responded to disability as a consequence of war. Comparison with their own experience allows study of changing social attitudes to disability and impairment.

### Follow on

Build your understanding of the issues facing people with disabilities through roleplay. Using blindfolds, ear defenders, and fabric to simulate the experience of losing the use of parts of the body, pupils can work in pairs to explore the impacts of physical impairments and how this changes the way people need to respond to each other.

Develop a design activity by planning a room suitable for a young person with a disability. You can compare the resources available to people at the time of the war to think about ways new technologies might be used and developed to improve facilities for people now and in the future.

*Learning points: Studying the First World War through local examples can help pupils gain historical perspective, by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history. Focusing on disability helps promote positive, well-informed attitudes and encourages pupils to reflect on how they can make changes to make their world more inclusive.*

## 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](https://archive.org/details/diary_nursing_sister_0911_librivox)

Introduction to responses to disability in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/disability-history/1914-1945/>

A full-length programme exploring the impact of disabled veterans on social perceptions:

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/wwis-forgotten-heroes-secret-history>

A poem on disability by Wilfred Owen:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/nov/13/disabled-wilfred-owen-poem>

Information about the Poppy Factory, Richmond, which has provided work opportunities for disabled soldiers since the First World War:

<http://www.poppyfactory.org/>

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.ww1commonwealthcontribution.org/WW1FSCCommonwealth_Contribution.html)

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

<http://primaryfacts.com/1645/world-war-1-facts-and-information/>

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