

This Learning Resource has been produced by the South Gloucestershire in the First World War Project 2014 – 2018, a public engagement project commemorating the centenary of the First World War.

The people of South Gloucestershire served in the armed forces, became nurses and worked in factories. They made aircraft, motorbikes and boots for the servicemen: even the horses were sent to the front line of The Great War. This project tells the stories of the contribution that South Gloucestershire made to the First World War.

Home life in the First World War

KS 1/2

Children will learn what life was like at home for the children of the First World War through two contemporary photographs.

National Curriculum: History/English

Can be used in conjunction with the learning resource 'School Children in the First World War'

Teacher's information.

This Learning Resource Contains:

- The two photographs; the girls knitting and the Wolf Cubs.
- Teachers Notes: Information about home life, including ideas of books and poems of the time.
- Activity – A quiz
- Other Free First World War Project Learning Resources
- Feedback form

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Home life in the First World War



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Home life in the First World War

Teachers Notes: Use the text to gain the background knowledge with which to talk to the class about the pictures. This helps the class to look further into the photographs and be able to understand how different home life was one hundred years ago and to answer the questions in the quiz.

What can these two photographs tell us?

Photography

One hundred years ago not many people had a camera, so a photographer came specially to take these pictures of the girls and the boys, the photographs were probably published in the local newspaper. The parents would have been told that the picture were going to be taken, so these children are clean and tidy, the girls are in their best clothes and the boys are in their smart new Wolf Cub uniforms. For some children, it may have been the only photograph they had taken in their entire childhood. They would have had to be very still, for the count of 10, so as not to blur the picture, which is why they might look a bit serious.

The Girls

These girls are knitting socks out of wool, real wool socks keep you warm, and most ordinary people wore them one hundred years ago, there were no others. In the First World War, The Red Cross asked for donations of knitted socks for servicemen to wear whilst serving in the war. So the schools took up the challenge and the children did this as part of their lessons.

Look at the girl in the photograph, standing on the far left; do you think she is happy with her sock? Now look at the girl standing at the other end do you think she is as pleased with her sock?

One hundred years ago, clothes were really expensive, so most of the clothes the girls are wearing were hand made by their Mums, Aunties or Grannies. Some of the clothes would have been handed down from older sisters or cousins. White cotton pinafores worn over their dresses, kept their other clothes cleaner. Pinafores were easier to wash and dry and looked smart.

Look at the way the girls have their hair, some have ribbons, some have hair bands. Does anyone have a fringe or plaits? Look at the different hairstyles in your class, fashion changes the way we look.

The children would learn to knit and sew in school and at home, by the time they were 7 or 8 years old, as in this picture they would be well practiced. It would probably take a whole term to knit a pair of socks, perhaps more; it depended on whether they could take it home to do as homework. They were very proud that the socks were going to be worn by the servicemen. Can you knit?

The Boys

Wolf Cubs, (now known as Cub Scouts) was a brand new organisation, up until 1916 you had to be eleven years old to be a Scout.

Baden Powell was the person who started off the Scout movement, he was a great friend of Rudyard Kipling who wrote the book "The Jungle Book", so when it came to the younger boys he named them 'Wolf Cubs' and their leaders became, Akela and Bagheera, after the characters in the book.

The Wolf Cubs had to make a promise:

To do my best

To do my duty to God and the King

To keep the law of the wolf pack

To do a good turn to somebody everyday

The motto was: **Do Your Best.**

The boys here are wearing either blue or green knitted jumpers, probably knitted by their Mums or Grannies. They have a knotted yellow scarf, shorts, long socks and a green hat with yellow piping. Stars were worn on the caps and stripes were worn on the arm. How has the uniform changed?

All boys wore short trousers then, until they were about fourteen years old. When they earned their badges they would be expected to know how to sew them on to their own jumper, themselves.

The boys also grew vegetables in the school gardens, for the school lunches and if there were too many vegetables, they were sold and the money was used to buy the wool for the girls to knit with and the seeds to grow more vegetables for the next year.

Boots

Look at the feet of these children. They are wearing sturdy leather lace up shoes or boots these were expensive so they were looked after and repaired, they would have to last you a long time. In some households these would be passed down too. If your feet are warm and dry you feel comfortable. Keeping leather shoes dry was problem; there were no wellington boots. A nightly job would be to polish your shoes and stuff newspaper in the toes to try to get them dry. Look at your own feet; see how different our footwear is today. Can you tie up your own shoelaces? These children would have been able to do it every day and from the very young age of four or five.

Jobs for children to do as a good turn or deed.

One hundred years ago, children would often have small jobs to do at home, every morning, before they went to school. Most houses were quite small; hardly any had even a cold tap inside, let alone a bathroom. Water had to be got for the house in buckets from a stream or a well or a pump in the street.

Washing

To wash you used water from the kettle and a small bowl, perhaps a weekly bath in a tin bath in front of the fire that was filled with saucepans of water, warmed over the fire. With no washing machines or dryers, washing and drying clothes took a great deal of their Mum's time and effort, so clothes were not washed as often as today, especially in winter. The toilet would be a bucket in a little shed down the garden called a 'privy'.

The Fire

Children would be asked to collect 'kindling', which are dry sticks needed to light the fire, every morning. There was no central heating, even for the big houses, everyone had coal fires. In the smaller houses, just one room would be warm in winter, usually the kitchen. The rooms were lit with candles or paraffin lamps, as there was no electricity.

Children would sleep several to a bed and 'top and tail' to save space, there were often large families. The bigger children kept an 'eye' on the little ones.

Even the school would only have one big stove to heat the whole big schoolroom.

The toilets would be a row of privies outside in the playground. Woollens kept the children warm when they were playing outside. With very few cars, everyone walked or cycled to school.

Books

The children would learn to read and write and to do arithmetic at school. They would sing and learn poetry off by heart. Here are some of the books they would have been able to read at school.

Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll

Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stevenson

Just so Stories – Rudyard Kipling

Anne of Green Gables – L.M. Montgomery

Wind in the Willows – Kenneth Grahame

The Story of King Arthur and his Knights – Howard Pyle

Poetry

How doth the little Crocodile

Improve his shining tail

And pour the waters of the Nile

On every golden scale

How eagerly he seems to grin

How neatly spreads his claws

And welcome little fishes in

With gently smiling jaws!

– Lewis Carroll

Tyger, Tyger burning bright

In the forests of the night

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

– William Blake

Recommended Reading for teachers: 'Full Hearts and Empty Bellies' by Winifred Foley

Home life in the First World War

Quiz

1. How many girls are there?
2. How many boys are there?
3. What are the girls doing and why?
4. What would the Wolf Cub leader be called?
5. What would be bought with the money from selling the vegetables from the school gardens?
6. Why were their clothes hand made?
7. What are they wearing on their feet?
8. What is an outside toilet called?
9. What is kindling?
10. Think of a good turn or deed that could be done.

Answers

1. 14
2. 22
3. Knitting socks for servicemen, for the war effort.
4. Wool for the girls to knit with and seeds for the garden.
5. Akela.
6. It was the cheapest way because clothes were expensive.
7. Leather boots.
8. A privy.
9. Dry sticks for fire lighting.
10. Keeping an eye on the little children, collecting kindling, getting the water in.

South Gloucestershire in the First World War Learning Resource

Other Free Learning Resources available are:

The Great War - Life in the Trenches - The Alf Flux Kit Bag (Plus a Loans Box)*

School Children in the Great War – Messages and Mufflers

The Girls who made Grenades – The Warmley Grenadiers

Empire Foods - The War at Sea - (Loans Box)*

The Amy Hill Autograph Book - Cleve Hill Hospital

The Amy Hill Autograph Book - Wounded on the Somme

The Hill and the Flux Family

Home Life during the First World War

The Armistice Day Investigation Quiz

* Booking is essential for the loans boxes by emailing: museums@southglos.gov.uk

For more information about this project please go to:

www.southglos.gov.uk/ww1

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South Gloucestershire in the First World War Project

Learning Resources Feedback Form

To mark the centenary of the First World War 1914-1918 these learning resources have been created to assist teachers in show the impact of the First World War in this area and also how communities were changed.

Please tell us what you think of these resources or if you have any comments or further information about the First World War in this area do let us know by filling in this form.

Please return to: museums@southglos.gov.uk

Name -----

School -----Date -----

Did you find the resources easy to use? Yes/No

How do you think the resources worked with your class?

Other Comments:-----

Thank you for your participation

This is an HLF project supported by South Gloucestershire Council. For more information and more free learning resources on The First World War in this area please go to: www.southglos.gov.uk/ww1

