

## YEAR 9 FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIER PROJECT

The aim of this project is to supplement the scheme of work about the First World War and to encourage students to

- Find out more about their local or family history
- Develop their research and evaluation skills
- Manage their time
- Understand that behind the lists of names on war memorials lies an individual human story

Before the project starts the students are taught in class about the causes of the war plus key details about trench warfare, major battles, weapons, trench life and conscientious objectors.

To launch the project 3 members of staff from Worthing Library were invited in to talk to 6 year 9 classes about the resources available to them for research including useful websites plus the reference library at Worthing as well as the local museum. Some students find this project too challenging and as an alternative some choose to present a general project about World War One focusing on trench life and the impact on their local area if they can find out about this.

The students are then given the task of choosing a soldier from the Sussex Roll of Honour. Unless they know of a relative that they would like to research we encourage them to choose someone local from the Royal Sussex regiment. We give them a research guideline sheet and a time plan to help them manage the project.

Over the next few lessons and extensive homework time they have to build up a picture of their soldier's experience using the limited details given on the Roll of Honour. For example if they are told he was in the 53<sup>rd</sup> division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion they would develop this into a page about this division and battalion, finding images and information about their wartime experiences and trying to link it to their soldier. The challenge is to research someone who is not famous; they have to use the internet and other resources in ways that they are not used to. We also ask them to evaluate their research by considering its usefulness and reliability in their conclusion which is like a log of their progress and experience.

This year (2013-14) the projects have been of a fantastic standard and the pupil response has been overwhelmingly positive. Many students (and parents) have been inspired and engrossed in researching their family history and several students commented that they would like to learn more about genealogy. They also really enjoyed the freedom to research and present their work in a very individual way. Some of the stories uncovered were incredibly moving and I really hope that Remembrance Day will now have an even greater significance for these young people, as they see human stories and sacrifice rather than lists of names on war memorials.

**History teachers: Rebecca Martin, Adam Smith and Karen Meers**