

**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.

## THE GIRLS WHO MADE GRENADES - The Warmley Grenadiers

KS 2/3

The children will learn how some of the local girls of Warmley played their valuable part in the war effort making grenades and keeping up the morale of the troops at the front

**National Curriculum: History/English.**

The story of the factory girls of Warmley who made 10,000,000 hand grenades or 'Mills Bomb' during the First World War. They played sports and also wrote poetry or 'Billy Do's and tucked them into the boxes of grenades for the soldiers to read, to keep up their morale on the battlefield.

### Teachers Information:

#### This Learning Resource Contains:

- A PowerPoint presentation  
(Downloadable with this Teachers Information on the SGC project website)
- Accompanying Teacher's Information and suggestion notes for each slide
- Activity – Writing poems
- Other First World War Project Learning Resources
- Feedback form

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## **The Girls Who Made Grenades - The Warmley Grenadiers**

### **Teacher's Information and suggestion notes for each slide**

This learning resource tells the story of the local girls who worked in the armaments factory at Warmley during the First World War.

Here, are further background notes for each of the slides in the accompanying PowerPoint for the storyteller to engage the audience by helping them to look really carefully into the images and expand on the page text.

#### **Warmley High Street**

The factory, where the girls worked was just behind the shop. Before the war it was a fireworks factory.

*Ask the children:* What can you see in this picture? Answer: Horse and cart, etc.

*Ask the children:* How can you tell this is an old photograph? Answer: It is in black and white: people are all looking at the camera as if it is a novelty, which it is: Everyone has hats on: No cars or lorries, parked or going along: No traffic signs/no yellow lines: No TV dishes or aerials on the houses.

There is no TV /Radio/ Computers and only a few richer people had telephones, which were land lines.

*Ask the children:* How did people get to know what was going on in the world? Answer: Newspapers: possibly cinema newsreels, if you lived near a cinema or picture house.

#### **Newspaper Advertisement**

Look at the details in the advertisement.

*Ask the children:* What is a firework made from? Answer: A firework is a small explosion of gunpowder and though pretty, is very dangerous. The conditions needed to make fireworks was the same as those to make bombs.

#### **Munitions poster**

The poster presents this job as the important work it was. The girl is putting on her work overalls, it looks like a uniform, like the soldier in the background. She is good looking, confident, something of a role model for the young girls and women wanting 'to do their bit' for the war effort. It was work for young girls, probably from fifteen years old and they got good wages, as it was dangerous work.

The girls had more independence and time off than a housemaid and more money than a shop girl. To be a low paid housemaid meant, living in your employer's house, with their rules. It meant being up before them and going to bed after them, forever at their beck and call. Girls had only one half day holiday, maybe, once a fortnight. Being a shop girl you could live at home and probably had Sundays and another half day, but it was low paid. Being a factory girl the hours were long, but the wages were very good, not as much as the working men, but good for the time.

#### **Factory Workers**

It was the tradition for women to stay at home, but many could not afford to do so. They had to contribute to the family income. These girls were the trailblazers of their generation, doing this dangerous work.

Most of the men were older or invalided out of the services. The young men were at war or in 'reserved' occupations.

#### **Factory workers - work clothes**

*Ask the children:* To check and see if they are wearing anything metal that they would not be allowed to wear if they were working here. Answer: Hairpins, zips etc.

What about their shoes? Do they have rubber soles?

*Ask the children:* Why would the girl's hair be tucked up? Answer: Long hair which might get in the way.

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## Warmley Grenadiers - Tug of War Team

Women's sport became very popular with women's football, hockey teams and tug-of-war teams.

*Ask the children:* If they like the sports kit and if they think it is practical.

*Ask the children:* Why are the girls wearing long skirts? Answer: Modesty and fashion of the day.

These girls would pay for and probably make, their own sports kit themselves.

## Match day

There were many other girls working at local factories making things such as, Douglas motorbikes, and boots, these factories also had their women's sports teams.

*Ask the children:* What sort of training do you think they might do for this? Answer: Probably very little, compared to today, maybe some running? But these girls were probably fitter than you might think.

The girls would help at home with the household chores, things like hand washing which would build up their muscles. There were no washing machines or other domestic devices and it was all done by hand. It really was 'housework'. Everyone also walked or cycled everywhere as few people had a vehicle or the money to pay for a ride. People also had a much healthier diet with much less sugar and virtually no processed food.

## The Work

Pretend you have a grenade and pass it around the audience very carefully (something, anything - maybe a tennis ball which represents a bomb). Ask them to be very careful with it, as it is passed from person to person, ask them how they feel handling such a thing. This is what the Warmley factory girls were doing all the time, handling bombs. It was easy but dangerous work, very stressful.

To help get through the day the girls made up poems.

## Billy Do's

Read out the examples:

*When the rustic leaves are falling  
And your mind from care is free  
While of others you are thinking  
Will you sometimes think of me?*

*'Down on the shore there lies a rock  
And on it is written forget me not!'*

*'Errors like straw upon the surface flow  
He who would search for pearls must dive below'*

*Ask the children:* Why would the answers come back in different languages? Answer: Because the troops at the front were from many different countries from around the world. Not just French and Belgian but Indian, African, Canadian, Australian and West Indian – British Empire troops of the time.

## War memorial unveiling.

*Ask the children:* Have they ever raised money for something in the community?

The people of Warmley and district raised money to have this memorial raised to honour those they had lost in the war. All crowded around on the day; everyone there would have known someone who was named on the war memorial, mothers, fathers, whole families and friends, mourning their dead.

From then on, not just on Armistice Day, but every day as they passed by the war memorial the Warmley people would remember those that were lost.

# The Girls Who Made Grenades - The Warmley Grenadiers

## Activity: **Writing Poems**

A 'Billy Do' is a short poem or saying very popular at the time of the First World War. 'Billy Do' comes from 'billet doux', translated from the French it means, sweet note or love letter.

### **Writing a 'Billy Do'.**

Each person composes and writes a short message in the form of a poem or saying.  
Work it out in rough first then write it in your **best handwriting**.

One as a factory girl, writing to the soldiers in the trenches.

Or

One as a soldier writing back to the factory girls.

### **Here are some original First World War examples:**

*Roses are red  
Violets are blue  
Sugar is sweet  
And so are you!*

*There is no uniform as dinky  
As the girls munitions blue  
She's working hard  
For the coming home  
Of the boys so true.*

*Never sigh dear you  
And I will meet again  
By and by...*

*Forget me not  
It's easier to say than to write!*

*Keep the home fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning  
Though your lads are far away  
They dream of home*

*There's a shining silver lining  
Through the dark cloud shining  
Turn the dark side inside out  
Till the boys come home.*

*In the stress and war of battle  
Wherever you may roam  
Remember you are in the thoughts  
Of those you left at home.*

*Time alone can prove  
How dear though art to me  
And within my thoughts you dwell  
Wherever you may be.*

*Behold the smart post lady  
Who brings letters to our houses?  
Also the tram conductors  
Are these sweet things in trousers?*

# 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](mailto:museums@southglos.gov.uk)

## For more information about this project please go to:

[www.southglos.gov.uk/ww1](http://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](mailto:museums@southglos.gov.uk)

Name of School -----

-----Date -----

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

How do you think the resources worked with your class?

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Other Comments-----

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### 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](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/ww1)

