



Conflict and Memory

Conflict and Memory, which took place from January – April 2006, has been a very exciting and rewarding collaboration between Shropshire County Council Arts Service, Shropshire Archives, five schools in the county and some local veterans of WWII.

The project aimed for WWII veterans and young people to meet and share memories and thoughts concerning the conflict, utilising Shropshire war memorials to explore some of the issues surrounding conflict and local history. Inspirational monuments in Shropshire include:

- Severn Valley Railway train which operated in Persia and Egypt with the Corps of Royal Engineers, dedicated in 1986 to the memory of all British military railwaymen who gave their lives on active service
- unusual memorial in Ruyton-XI-Towns in the form of a cave cut into solid rock, recently listed by English Heritage
- clay figure of a soldier in Stokesay churchyard; and the statue of a soldier throwing a grenade in Castle Gardens in Bridgnorth.

Other memorials include hospital beds, a bridge at Coalport, crosses, lych gates, memorial tablets in town and village halls, and pubs and clubs all over the county. The majority of these relate to the First World War and are tangible examples of what has been described as the biggest public art project in history, where thousands of war memorials were erected throughout the country.

Schools worked with internationally renowned artist film maker Dave Brunskill to create a series of animated films. Due to Dave's unique skills and experience the project grew from being quite open ended in terms of artistic outcome at the planning stage, into a unique, contemporary digital memorial of Shropshire's War, made by Shropshire school pupils themselves.

The schools involved were

- St. Lawrence's C E Primary School, Church Stretton
- Bridgnorth Endowed School
- St. Leonard's Primary School, Bridgnorth
- Coleham Primary School, Shrewsbury
- Wakeman School, Shrewsbury

The pupils have been involved in learning a whole range of skills during the making of these films, including extensive research into the subject, talking to

friends, relatives, looking at websites, visiting museums, war memorials and other sites, script writing, storyboard design, soundtrack recording, artwork production, stop frame animation, camerawork and documentary making.

A range of exciting visits was arranged including RAF Cosford, Port Sunlight, to see the remarkable village war memorial, Brignorth's memorial next to the castle and the Severn Valley Railway, to see the train dedicated as a war memorial

As well as the films created, the Conflict and Memory website is also a very impressive record of the project and includes a gallery of works of art from each school, photographs of some of the workshops and links to other websites. Please visit www.conflictandmemory.co.uk