

Kingston Museum and Heritage Service

Evaluation of the Kingston at War Website

This website was evaluated with St. John's School, Kingston upon Thames and individual students in local secondary schools, during June 2007. The Generic Learning Outcomes from the *Inspiring Learning for All* framework were used to assess the learning effectiveness of the site. The main learning outcomes are:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning new facts
- Deepening understanding

Skills

- Communication skills

Attitudes and Values

- Empathy
- Opinions towards other people

Knowledge and Understanding

Schools

The primary sources on the website gave pupils a direct link with what happened during the Second World War and deepened their understanding of the war and the Home Front. Specifically:

- Bombings raids took place in Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden
- What firewatching was
- What life was like in the underground and an Anderson Shelter during a bomb raid

“I didn't realise that had happened to so many people”

Year 6 Pupil, St. John's School

Individuals

For Individuals looking at the site learning new facts and deepening a previous understanding was a major outcome. Specifically:

- Ages of men in the Home Guard
- Reserved occupations
- The civil defence and the different jobs within it
- Kingston, New Malden and Surbiton were bombed during the war.

“It was strange to see New Malden Police Station being sandbagged as may have been a target. This is a building in my area”

Skills

Schools

By using the site on a whiteboard in the classroom, the class worked together as a group to discuss and interpret the primary evidence, critique the video interviews and identify local places. They used and developed their communications skills, specifically:

- Listening skills
- Map reading
- Identifying photographs
- Group discussion
- Reading to the class and answering questions

Attitudes and Values

Empathy - Schools

The whole site enables pupils to empathise with people (alive and dead) who lived in the Kingston and their local area during The Second World War.

The photographs of bomb damage and video interviews were a strong feature for the lesson and pupils used their emotional skills to produce work around other people's experiences. Pupils talked about how they have to put themselves into the right frame of mind.

“... I could actually picture it”

“I like to wind myself up before I write.”

Year 6 pupils, St. John's C of E Primary School

Empathy - Individuals

The videos showed veterans from the Home Front sharing their experiences. Individuals found this a powerful way to learn about the blitz and life in the Kingston area. Real people relating their own histories proved to be a strong way to encourage empathy.

“The video of the underground, made me feel about sharing beds, cramped conditions, no real toilets. Makes me think what it would have been like to have gone through that. “

Year 11 Student, Tiffin Boys School.

“I felt bad for these people. This was normal for them. They must think we have it easy, when we think we haven’t.”

Year 9 Pupil, Chessington Community College

“Some of the stories were exciting and I wanted to hear more, but at the same time I wouldn’t want to be there.”

Year 9 Pupil, Chessington Community College

Opinions towards other people - Schools

The class teacher believed that the photographs, maps and video stories on the website improved pupils’ attitudes and values to veterans of the war and home front, in particular:

- A positive attitude towards veterans of the home front and older people in our society
- Re-enforced decent attitudes towards society, gratitude and respect of what people have suffered, have been through and sacrificed during war

Opinions towards other people - Individuals

The individual students who looked at the site felt that they had more respect for older people who live through the bombings and blitz.

“The bomb maps and photographs show where was bombed in my area. Seeing someone’s house bombed like that brings it home to me.”

Year 11 Student, Tiffin Boys School.

Report compiled by Howard Bengé August 2007