

## 'Lest We Forget' Case Studies: Cheney and Our Lady (Abingdon) Schools

### *Running your own WW1 School Digital Collection Day*

#### *All you need is:*

- 1. a room*
- 2. a digital camera*
- 3. a computer with internet*
- 4. staff and student volunteers*

The 'Lest We Forget' project has now run several very successful World War One Digital Collection Days<sup>1</sup> at local schools. Our experience at these events may be useful for teachers who are interested in running their own. We present here a case study of two schools – Cheney, a secondary and sixth form school in Oxford, and Our Lady, a senior school in Abingdon. Students at these schools had a unique opportunity to interact directly with history, taking part in interviewing, recording, and digitizing important First World War objects and stories.

### Organising

One of the key success factors was having a couple of motivated teachers in each school who were prepared to act as the main organisers. They secured the venues, got the students to volunteer, arranged the training (see below), and also managed and oversaw logistics on the day.

### Training

As both of these schools were local to the Oxford team we were able to offer two sets of training. First, we visited the schools and ran a 45 minute session for the teachers. Essentially, this was a walk-through of the collection day itself (using the slide set at: <https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/organise-digital-collection-day>). We also visited each venue (a school library and theatre, respectively) and talked through the logistics and set-up.

The week before the event, we also ran a 30-45 minute training slot with the student volunteers. We suggested having about a dozen students (preferably a mixture, with some A-level students if available) and we took them through a shortened version of the slide set (also available at: <https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/organise-digital-collection-day>). After this, we did a walk-through of an WW1 item with a mock visit to the welcome desk, the interview, and the digitisation station to look at the forms that needed to be completed.

### Venue

In both schools, they booked out a large hall (the library at Cheney, and the school hall/theatre at Abingdon). These were a good size, quite near an entrance that could be managed, and had space not just for the Collection Day but also to host FrontLine Living History (see below). Both schools

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<sup>1</sup> Essentially, a Digital Collection Day involves members of the community being invited to bring in their Great War stories, photographs, diaries, and letters to your school, where members of your staff and students can document and digitize these vital items so that they can be saved for future generations. The documented stories and objects will then be uploaded to a free-to-use Oxford University database, where they will be freely accessible to all members of the public to discover, research, and learn

decided to run Collection Days that were open to the public in the afternoon (1-4pm) but in the morning had FrontLine Living History giving talks to relevant classes/years.



Example of room layout/set-up

## Pre-Event

Leading up to the event, teachers assigned students their tasks/roles during the collection day (welcome desk, interviewing, digitizing, for example). The teachers also organised the advertising for the event. This was started several weeks in advance. Three key things were addressed:

- 1) Notifying the parents of the pupils in the school of the event and seeing if they had any WW1 items that could be brought in to digitise;
- 2) Getting permission from parents for photography of the event;
- 3) Advertising to the local community through local radio, newspapers, posters in libraries, and on social media, etc., telling people to bring items along, time and place, and the purpose of the event. Both schools had elected for the collection day to be open to members of the public and had worked out the logistics in terms of signing in and overseeing members of the public just walking in.

## The Event

On the Collection Day, the teachers ensured the venue—its tables, chairs, signage, etc.—was in place. As both schools were local to Oxford, the Lest We Forget Team provided and set up the digitization area, complete with camera, tripods, and scanner. Before the event, teachers also divided students into their assigned groups: 2 for the welcome desk, 4 or 5 pairs of 2 students for the interviewing desks (8 -10)—this allowed one student to ask the questions, while the other filled in the story form—and 3-4 pairs of students for digitization (6-8). As Abingdon had a large number of student volunteers, a small group of sixth form students also oversaw each station, ready to provide additional help if things got busy. Throughout the event, teachers generally oversaw the main areas, ready to answer any questions. They also monitored the timely flow of the event, ensuring that people who had brought in objects were not waiting long at each stage.

## FrontLine Living History

Frontline Living History were hired by both schools to come first during the school day (before the event) to provide demonstrations and to teach students about the First World War. (Their website can be found here: <http://www.frontlinelivinghistory.com/museums--community-groups>).

At Cheney, for example, Frontline provided a talk on Battlefield Medicine, complete with a variety of related WW1 objects and replicas for students to handle and/or try on. During the event, Frontline then set up a large table for members of the public (and students) to view a diverse collection of WW1 material; they also advised on the material brought in by the public and demonstrated equipment and kit used in the war.

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

*What was the most interesting artefact you encountered on the day?*

A man's father's cigarette box stopped a bullet and saved him

A cross (grave marker) which had been brought over from France

I found the story of a man who had kept a huge archive of his father very interesting. He kept every photo, postcard, letter and diary for 100 years. This was so interesting because he had so much that was still in good condition

*What did you most enjoy about taking part in the event?*

I enjoyed talking to people and finding out their stories

I enjoyed helping in the school community and hearing the amazing stories

I enjoyed hearing the types of family stories that I have never heard before. It was interesting hearing different sides of the war.

Doing the digitisation

## IF YOUR SCHOOL WOULD LIKE RUN ITS OWN EVENT

Get in touch with us via our website (<https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/home>), where you can also download our training pack and watch a training PowerPoint. And/or email us at: [ww1collections@it.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ww1collections@it.ox.ac.uk). You can also read our guide for schools on how to integrate the Collection Day into Key Stage teaching: [https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/lwf/documents/media/digital\\_collection\\_days\\_a\\_guide\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://lwf.web.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/lwf/documents/media/digital_collection_days_a_guide_for_schools.pdf)

Thank you sincerely for your time, we hope to hear from you soon,

With very best wishes,

The *Lest We Forget* Team  
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