World War One – Centenary Websites

British Library World War One
http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one

The latest addition to the British Library’s useful collection of Learning mini-websites, this website provides curated access to over 500 historical resources from across Europe, including books, maps, illustrations and postcards from both sides of the conflict. Items can be found by searching by keyword or by browsing by theme of which there are eight: Origins, outbreak and conclusions; The war machine; Life of a soldier; Race, empire and colonial troops; Civilians; Propaganda, Representation and memory; Historical debates. They are supported by over 50 articles by experts – an eclectic selection ranging from Supply and Logistics through Sensuous life in the trenches to Children’s’ experiences and by a range of teaching resource packs. The layout of the website is clear, with a top bar giving access to the different sections of the website and an attractive tiled interface within each. Collection items, teaching resources and search results also have a toolbar down the side enabling you to see and filter by section appropriate headings such as theme, language, creator, level or content type. The teaching resources packs are downloadable PDFs which have live links to the resources on the website which are presented with linked materials also shown. The site is a treasure trove of useful and often unexpected information.

First World War 100: The National Archives
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/

The National Archives has an enormous collection of relevant material and they have undertaken a five year program of organization, digitization and events to make as much of it as possible accessible. Major anniversaries and key aspects of the war will be explored through a series of themes: diplomacy; technology; home front; air and sea; peace; bravery and courage; medicine and health; and global perspectives. There are events, such as a videoconference with a soldier in the trenches; a collection of podcasts and videos and the Voices of the Armistice podcast series (originally created in 2008 for the 90th anniversary of the Armistice) and blog posts which cover a wide range of topics (secret spy socks, anyone?). The site is designed primarily as a user-friendly way of accessing the records held by the National Archives so to find the items most useful for pupils to use such as the podcasts, videos and the blogs it is necessary to scroll right down to the bottom of the page.

Operation War Diary
http://www.operationwardiary.org/

Operation War Diary is one of these National Archives initiatives. It is an opportunity for pupils (and adults) to contribute to the body of knowledge about the First World War. A joint project between the National Archives, the Imperial War Museum and Zooniverse it aims to use ‘Citizen Historians’ to improve access to the information in the Unit War Diaries held by the National Archives. The diaries have been digitized and the War Diary participants are asked to work through these pages classifying and tagging them. A Field Guide link in the top toolbar provides help and advice on how to tag entries and there is a step by step tutorial to watch before starting. The ‘historian’ chooses the page ‘type’ e.g. diary entry, signals pad; the tagging menu varies according to the page type but typically includes date, time, place and any named persons. The data gathered by the project will be used to enrich the National Archives collection and to provide evidence for its ‘Lives of the First World War’ project. A discussion forum and a blog provide further information and support. This would be a really interesting project to involve senior pupils in giving them a deeper understanding not just of the war but also of the processes involved in research and archives.
World War One Centenary: Continuations and Beginnings
University of Oxford and JISC
http://ww1centenary.oucs.ox.ac.uk/

This site is a joint development by Oxford University and JISC and describes itself as ‘An Open Educational Resource supporting new directions in teaching World War I.’ This means that all the materials available are licensed for reuse under a Creative Commons License making it a tremendous resource for pupils undertaking their own investigations. Much of the material has been specially created by Oxford University. The resources are organized into 12 cross-disciplinary themes including Body and Mind; Unconventional soldiers; Aftermath; Machine; and Strange Meetings. Selecting a theme links to a page with 2 columns: one with in-depth essays around the topic, the other with links to resources which include images, e-books, videos, diaries, letters, maps and more. Resources can also be accessed from the resources page by browsing by format or by searching – a word of caution here, the search also returns results from Wikipedia and Flickr although they are clearly separated from the results in the main resource. The home page also includes links to Teacher Resources; Librarian Resources (the resources of the site classified according to Dewey and Library of Congress, and with downloadable QR codes promised in the future); quick links to the interactive maps and simulations and a link to developer resources.

The Daily Telegraph
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/ww1-archive/

Starting from 1 January 2014, the Daily Telegraph has been putting online each day a PDF of that day’s paper from 1914 and they aim to continue doing this until the end of 1918 providing access to a bank of original material. Each day’s edition of the paper has a strapline with a main news item e.g. ‘Yarmouth Pier is wrecked by a suffragette bomb’ and clicking on the date leads to a scrollable image of the paper, a commentary on the headline and a more detailed account of the edition’s contents. A PDF of the newspaper can be downloaded; this allows the text to be enlarged to a more comfortable size for reading. The PDFs have been made by photographing bound volumes of the paper so one can really get a feel for the period. The archive is not searchable or indexed, so it is necessary to have an idea of the date required but as a resource for showing contemporary perspectives it is very valuable.

Imperial War Museum
http://www.iwm.org.uk

The IWM was established in 1917 ‘to ensure that future generations understood the causes and consequences of war, to collect and display material as a record of everyone’s experiences during that war and to remember the men and women who served.’ Funded partly by the government, the National Lottery and donations, the family of five IWM museums reaches out to schools and offers a range of free resources, teaching activities and source materials. From the home page there is a direct link to the First World War centenary area. Schools can register to benefit from the free digital assets and discussion areas. A series of over thirty podcasts has been made available from the museum sound collection including titles such as ‘Why the war broke out’ and ‘Passchendaele’ (http://www.1914.org/podcasts). The Ministry of Information First World War official collection forms one section of the site and the resources can be shared and reused under the terms of the IWM non-commercial license. Photographs with descriptions have been organised by place, e.g. the Somme and by event, e.g. British Home Front. Images are also searchable by service and keyword. Links are also given to associated themes and pages. It is very easy to get lost in this fascinating collection of high quality images. This site provides an excellent and extensive range of original source materials to support the teaching and learning of history and cross-curricular projects. Suitable for primary
and secondary school with activities linked to the key stages, this collection of resources comes highly recommended.

**First World War Centenary 1914–1918**
http://www.1914.org

This website gathers together information about a range of interested parties led by The Imperial War Museum which forms an international network of over 1,400 educational and cultural organisations promoting projects, events and digital platforms to inform about life during the period. It functions as a signposting site for keeping up-to-date with progress of projects and new resources and highlighting the work of local groups connected with the Centenary. The new section allows new digital resources and projects to be found by region and this is the main benefit of this gateway. Schools and colleges may join the partnership and submit their own resources and gain access to free centenary digital assets including the helpful time lines.

**Europeana 1914–1918**

Co-funded by the European Union but initiated and backed by Oxford University, this site continues the search for family letters, photos, objects and keepsakes to be digitised on a European wide level. The project is in its early stages and is developing on a country by country basis. The collections contain images with commentaries and details in the language in which the items were submitted. Explore the stories allows for keyword searching, for example, trench life uncovers 904 stories. The only downside is the use of Microsoft Translator to translate from language to language. It does not work as well as it might. The site, used from a thematic point-of-view, will allow discovery about areas such as propaganda and the histories of ordinary people across Europe.

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission**
http://www.cwgc.org/

Gathering information on men and women from Commonwealth forces that died in both World Wars, this site aids research into individual soldiers or former pupils and is useful for preparation for battlefield trips. Searching is possible by surname, regiment or cemetery amongst other criteria and is a useful starting point for building up portraits of those who are known to have died wherever they are buried. Advice is given as to how to conduct each of the searches. Local cemeteries in the UK are also included which could help research on a local level.

**Oxford University WWI Literature site**
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/

The First World War Poetry Digital Archive on-line repository created by Oxford University contains over 7,000 items of text, audio and video and is intended to support teaching and research. Much of the archive is arranged by collection and consists of primary material from major poets of that time. Freely available to schools and the public the materials are extremely useful for literature study in addition to researching the historical context. Contextual materials include the previously mentioned collections plus digitized publications of the period. The education area offers a series of online seminars suitable for Key Stage 4 onwards and teaching resources for all Key Stages. This highly valuable resource rewards exploration and includes a separate section for the Great War.

The Great War Archive (http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/gwa) holds over 6,500 digitized items contributed by the general public covering experiences from the First World War. Navigation of the contents can be achieved by keyword browsing or specific searches using the
search box, for example, the keyword Letters finds digitized copies of mainly handwritten letters written by servicemen and others with explanatory notes. This is an absorbing crowd sourced collection which could be used effectively in school for research and background. Links to other worthwhile websites such as the BBC and the National Archives are provided.