Remembering Remembrance: the quick sands of preparing and interrogating evidence Mantle and commission work.

Professor DOROTHY HEATHCOTE 2010

This paper involves the work of two groups of teachers so it needs must be written in two parts though each part completes the other. The first section¹ deals with teacher preparation – the contemplative phase, and the second² the putting into praxis the tasks, which support the curriculum learning.

Both sections are underpinned by the philosophy and principles, which presuppose a drama input to the learning process. The drama element permits contexts to be invented enabling class and teacher to share power in the taking of decisions. The contexts also weaken the class reliance upon teacher information as the main source of knowledge, and provide opportunity for both to interrogate evidence, which can be provided to support the contextual change. This change is negotiated by contracts between teacher and class so that all the way through the work, every one remains aware that it is an agreed way to fulfill the curriculum study, and no deception is used. Class and teacher share all the knowledge as it emerges, through all the participants recognize the teachers position in protecting the students into the study, and guiding the procedures towards understanding the curriculum areas.

This change from class dependence upon teacher information follows two principles, which infiltrate all the working tasks. The first principle is that of “Making strange” or distancing to bring the learning content into close range, enabled by the fictional element inducted through drama³.

“Distancing is a means of detouring feeling to arrive at feeling. It is the strategy which allows students to find meaning in situations which by their immediacy, might inhibit exploration”. [Norah Morgan and Juliana Saxton – teaching drama. A mind of many wonders. London/ Hutchinson 1987 p. 136]

This apparent paradox will become clear when examples are explained in the paper.

The second principle is that knowledge and understanding of the curriculum area is gained as teacher and class interrogate evidence, which is provided expressly for purpose. It is this principle, which underpins the whole concept of “Mantle of the Expert” style of teaching and follows the precepts embedded in the second and third learning levels expressed in the Thomas Jefferson systems of Education. (p31 teaching a generation of leaders)⁴

Level 1. Public education – preparing everyone for a job. What to think: Curriculum provided by approved textbooks.

¹ These teachers were attending a Creativity conference at Red bridge on November 15th 2009
² These teachers were participating in a day’s consideration of Mantle of the Expert Style of teaching in Gwent Theatre on November 2nd, 2009.
³ “Distancing at close Range” Stig A. Ericsson °ABO 2009. ISBN 988-952-12-2314-3 14 Arkmedia Oy Ab Vasa 2009,
⁴ “Thomas Jefferson Education” Published by Oliver Van Der Mille. ISBN 0 9671246-1-1
Level 2. Professional Education creating specialists who know when to think. Curriculum provided by case studies.

Level 3. Leadership education, teaching students how to think. The curriculum is a mix of the best available evidence and a mentoring relationship with teachers.

The drama element allows teachers to shift the power-base between teachers and their classes, by an agreement to temporarily assume a professional stance so that they are serving the needs of clients who have sought their assistance in resolving some dilemma which will involve them in studying the curriculum the teacher wishes to introduce as the main study. This position involves them in dealing with responsibility and ethics rather than only information, and brings certain problems to the teacher in preparing the evidence, which will become the source of learning as the work proceeds.

Providing the evidence became the work of the teachers at the Redbridge conference, and the curriculum study was related with "Remembrance" practices sustained through the years regarding the circumstances of those fighting in the World War of 1914-1918. The context was chosen when I met a group of teachers in a Derbyshire primary school who were looking for a way to invigorate their own interest in helping their young students in years 3 and 4 to glean some sense beyond that of "poppy day” remembrance and war memorials. They were examining war contexts which might shift the perspective without dwelling upon the terrible circumstances of trench warfare and the loss of a generation of young men from countries associated with the British Empire.

Their final decision involved these elements.

1. The point of professionalism would be that their students would be librarians involved in selecting books and stories about World War I for a touring exhibition in Derbyshire villages during November.
2. Their clients therefore would be children and adults seeing the exhibition when exchanging books, DVD’s, and CD tapes during November in the library.
3. The context would be modified by the need to focus upon a request from a local family (5) to examine the contents of a box discovered in the family attic during the house clearance of an elderly relative recently died. This box would hold within it, the possessions of a young soldier who has died in the battle of Cambrai in 1917 returned to the family by the war office. These “possessions” would enable many kinds of evidence to be made available ranging from official documents, personal letters and memorabilia, photographs, poetry, objects.

Selecting this context fulfills the important elements of Mantle of the Expert teaching.

1. It shall seem reasonable to contemporary students that old things can be found in homes lived in by their grandparents.
2. It shall create permission to be curious, and
3. It should seem important at the time to be kept for other people to know about.
This web of point of view, evidence and process of responsibility, is the constant dilemma of teachers invoking professionalism and leadership learning, and involves very clear thought when creating the task basis for study throughout the contemplative planning stage. The teacher is envisioning “what will the children be engaged in doing” in order to study the selected curriculum. The list of possible tasks is large but must be used with careful discrimination in the projected plans. Because the list below is all verbs a teacher will easily be able to envisage students engaged in any of the activities listed. This is the stage in planning when the list is a useful reference point.

A possible task list - all verbs, so actively doing in order to provide the means by which something can be achieved. Praxis.

Seeking – (enquiring, searching for).
Searching (re-finding, recalling, looking into, searching for detail
Scrubbing - (looking at examining carefully
Classifying - (arranging systematically),
Checking – (controlling to secure accuracy
Annotating – (adding further explanation)
Advising – (to inform, notify, having power to do so, having an opinion.
Building – (to place parts together, to establish incrementally
Forming – (the outer shaping, visible appearance, to know the structure
Labeling – (describing, classifying
Decode – (to penetrate, to make plainer
Encode – (to place in another form that is rationalized
Listening – (to attend alertly
Selecting – (to make choices, choosing carefully
Briefing – (to involve others, to warn, to instruct a head of events
Explaining – (give account of, show the meaning of
Examining - (testing knowledge about, penetrating meaning
Transforming - (to change outer appearance, keeping miner meaning
Remodeling - (reconstruct rearrange, reorganize
Remember - (recalling reassemble
Organize – (arranging in some specific order related to interest
Clarifying – (making clearer
Estimating – (to form an evaluation, make a judgment
Evaluating – (making some assessment
Enquiring – (interrogating, searching into
Discriminating – (differentiating
Consulting – (to confer with
Exhibiting – (publicly showing or expressing
Seeing – (considering, perceiving, taking time over to understand, attending
Ordering – (arranging methodically

All these tasks give authority to those who participate in them, and each one involves interrogating materials of various kinds. Later it may involve drama episodes when
persons can be represented and interrogated. Before the teachers at Redbridge could begin to consider which “contents” would be most suitable to be placed in private Proffit’s personal belongings box, they needed to understand that this particular inquiry into World War I conditions could not be a “Mantle of the Expert” involving a lengthy engagement with curriculum format, because it had a short – term time life span, the Remembrance element of World Wars. If students had run a library a curriculum may have involved a great deal of classifying books, learning library systems, speed reading of contents and perhaps writing précis. In fact a superb entry into many aspects of language. From this, it would have reached November time of “Remembrance” if the teacher so wished, or could have required at some stage, an exhibition of works arising our of World War I experiences – the war poets, or novels or viewing paintings and / or films or people recalling their own memories.

“Private Proffit’s Box” became a commission so would have necessitated a contract to agree that teacher and class would be for this time, only people who know about libraries. This could have been achieved by each sharing in a community task which would have brought to the surface memories and ideas about what happens in libraries without relying on the teacher’s information. Thus, when the commission and box arrived librarianship would have been the immediately preceding experience. Remember there is never any guile or pretending involved. The agreement is that all will agree that we work in a library and the arrival of the commission box would have been planned together. How should it arrive? From the school office delivered to “our library?” Should an agreement be made that one person representing a post – person bring it in? What need NOT be discussed in advance is what the parcel contained BUT students would need to know that with November 11th approaching, librarians often use the opportunity to think about having poppies on the counter or a special display about remembrance.

Consider the letter accompanying the box, and the type of box a teacher might select to carry Private Profits’ belonging. Now we enter the field of drama signing, and believability.

Certain questions must be contemplated by the teacher. An introductory document which must frame (i.e. clearly invoke) the point of view and responsibility of the sender/s plus their purpose in entrusting family documents to a local library. This requires its own “voice” (style) and “imprint” – form of address, appearance of notepaper and envelope because, remember, modern children are used to interpreting signs and significators from their exposure to film, television and book cover designs. They can know, (indeed they should do so) that it has been contrived, while at the same time recognize that it has all the “signed” hallmarks to represent being genuine. Thus they and the teacher begin the process of agreeing to sustain the fiction by their wills, and the artist element ⁵ becomes present.

⁵ This is akin to play from which all the arts spring "I take time out to agree, for the time, that I am in the penalty free zone of human behavior and recognize that I am sustaining it till I wish to stop it
The outer form of the box. Signs of age, any labels, redirections, and elements indicating means of carriage from the place Private Profitt had it in his personal charge. Such a box can reveal an enormous amount of war information: his regiment, his rank, dates, and places. The packaging materials which would indicate that other hands than those of Private Profitt would have been responsible for the final journey from the front line. Also any indications that it had been opened by the receiving family at the time of Private Profitt’s being declared deceased.

This is not textbook antiseptic information. All signs are indicators to be interpreted from the point of view of responsible and ethical librarians who study all evidence so as to “read” sign so they can assess and evaluate the best thing to do about it, having been entrusted to decide on the future of Private Profitt’s box.

Then the contents found within the box. These must introduce exactly the curriculum areas such a commission context can provide to introduce the class to aspects of World War I “remembrance” time. You can see I why discussed this earlier as plans and contemplation. Whatever curriculum is deemed desirable for study purposes must be provided as evidence to be interpreted. The teachers in the village school, once they heard that there was an authentic Private Profitt, used all the genuine evidence available to them, and from this point their box contained some genuine objects the young man would have collected. A list of these is available in part 2 of this paper.

The teachers at the Redbridge conference had only a few hours in which to suggest what contents should be found within the box. They used a variety of papers and thin and thick writing tools, but had no access to “correct” ink pens. Below is the list of materials they chose to hand to me for later processing at the Gwent Theatre conference. At this point they were only informed about how the box was discovered and ended up with a group of librarians. Also that the owner of the box and contents had been Private Profitt who was killed at the battle of Cambrai 1917.

The teachers created 38 prices of evidence which could have been found in the box returned to the Profitt family from the front after the Battle of Cambrai. These included family letters (mother, sister) notes from his fiancée (Hilda) and friends from school days some of whom were also in the army at the same time. These letters gave news of home, reminded James / Jamie of earlier times. One or two were memorabilia of more pleasant past events (theatre tickets (Marie Lloyd) and receipts for fish and chip meals (3/9d). These were drawn objects – a pocket watch from his grandfather with dedication from a factory for long and useful service and a “hair” brooch set in gold. Some documents were official sent by an army doctor with instructions regarding protection of soldiers in bad weather. One indicates some sort of misdemeanor done by Private Profitt, which must be answered formally at an enquiry with evidence from a sergeant regarding “leaving his post”. There were objects necessitated by hygiene (shaving brush and soap) faith indicators such as a rosary and prayer book and a Gospel of St Mark. Private Profitts identification bracelet giving his army number – 49966. One group of drawings indicated that the
young man was a visual observer. There were small pencil sketches of places – vistas and closer details of sand bags and trench conditions, bound together with sisal string. A larger drawing was a meditation on his army boots – their condition, fit and “memories” of mud, pavements, distances walked. There was his most recent medical record-evidence of the period when he was missing and severely wounded in the lower leg, right though a week in December until he died after amputation and gangrene ‘on December 15th 1917 at 2:23am’ Blood poisoning being diagnosed as the cause of death. One document was a tiny fragment torn from a letter with words “terrified, smells, cold will kill if bullets don’t and can't let family down” attached to a dried poppy ‘to be sent to Hilda’. Some were letters “from Hilda”.

Congratulations to the teachers at Redbridge for an imaginative range of offerings, all of which could have logically been found in a box returned to Private Profitt’s family by his commanding officer in December 1917.

So how to use them to create a keyhole view about why the war of 1914-18 should be remembered each year on November 11th? What criteria affects choice, and which must be solid objects? Some can be indicated without need of genuine and perhaps precious or delicate things too risky to be placed in the hands of young children. So a teacher needs an uncompromising laser eye when choosing the contents of the box.

Let us return to the original context to see if it really can provide that essential keyhole- focused glimpse into vast available evidence of Britain during the years 1914-18. We personalize the war because we have the contents of his box sent back to his family. This exactly follows drama / theatre law. Large events are explored through identification with the lives of a few key people. The Greek writers understood this when audiences saw events enacted in ‘now – immediate’ time by actors representing the ideas of the time. The Trojan woman taken to be slaves on Greek ships are more than a few named individuals brought low by the antics of Helen, her Greek husband Menelaus and Paris her Trojan lover. Their fate opens up the futility of war to those who can look behind events to the implications of all the behaviours of a few selected individuals. In using Private Profitt’s box many people and their part in his life as a soldier can be represented, for we are not making a play. We are privileged researchers able to put together many aspects of life at the time without it being filtered though antiseptic facts, however attractively presented in pictures they may be in these days of print and technology. So the box passes muster. It is evidence uncluttered by the interference of experts who know a lot about the war of 1914-18.

The way it is brought to the attention of the young students can be made to feel reasonable to their scrutiny. They know old things turn up from the past, and libraries, museums and old houses look after them so visitors can share learning about them.
By being given authority to explore handle display and explain to other people the meaning of the box they will enter First World War business minus the burden of someone else’s viewpoint. Consider how rarely our modern children are in a position to encounter raw data. They cannot wander into territories beyond the immediate home environment. The wonderful range of evidence available from books television and technology is difficult to questions because it is so beguiling and usually honestly convincing.

The whole business is risky and a teacher needs to stare these risks in the face in finalizing the choice of this contextual approach.

1. Can he/she tolerate the children’s own interpretation regarding the archaeological box site?
2. What precautions can be made so that misunderstandings can be reconsidered?
3. Can the box be protected from being treated as a parcel and harmed by mishandling through imminence?

Teacher and class will be in exactly the same position as all archaeologists are when they encounter a site previously unexplored, but classrooms are places well known and familiar to our young archaeologists. They hold the daily rituals and familiar objects plus the differential powers of an adult in this place. How to temporarily “fade” the power of place and invite an encounter between the lenses of librarians and the objects inside a parcel sent into their care? So shifts in contexts for learning are more complex than a few words like “shall we pretend we are librarians” and “this box belonged to a soldier who fought in World War I which we are going to learn about”. Yet the complexity is not difficult to resolve if we hang into the laws of theatre. So long as we remember all the participants are engaged with point of view, evidence of responsibility and therefore ethical behavior towards the box and the people who have entrusted us with its care and usefulness. Throughout this archaeological dig everyone will be equally busy on tasks which will begin with a box of found objects and end with a serious explanation and exposition to others about the meaning and significance of everything. The power to be responsible for all that also enables everything to be checked against other information so readily available now to modern children. How far this further exploration and verification will be undertaken, lies in the teacher’s judgment as mentor/colleague regarding the age and maturity of the class, plus the time available and the degree to which World War I need to be exposed in reference to “Remembrance” day. This every teacher must decide for themselves.

These matters become essential if the context change is to be negotiated and will require selective “signing”. Let us review for the last time:

1. The box itself – its appearance, presentation of “old-ness” in the eyes of young children.
2. The accompanying document explaining what it is, how it was found and why it is being handed over. This is the commission.
3. The librarian lens through which everyone will be controlled and empowered to interfere with it. This is the point of view, and
4. Indications of responsibility for outcomes which will provide the “learning about Remembrance” experiences the teacher hopes for. This responsibility must include accurate understanding of the “field” of World War I and empathetic comprehension regarding the experiences of one soldier, who will represent all those who participated in those times so that their contributions is “remembered” each year on November 11th. [If you can’t stand the heat don’t get into the kitchen!]

**Part two: the commission put into praxis, involving the drama elements elements which permit the change of context whereby students and teacher contract into an agreement that for a time they can hold a point of view and relationship which will subdue the pupil “come to learn” and the teacher “holder of the knowledge” of the curriculum field.**

The selected commission is related with studying aspects of World War I leading to why Remembrance Day is celebrated publicly each year on November 11th. “The eleventh minute of the eleventh hour of the eleventh day” when the firing ceased in 1918.

In planning commissions there must be no indulgent drift into irrelevance. This applies to all the art forms and drama as education is no exception.

**Form:** That which exists to serve its own nature and from which nothing can be taken without loss and nothing can be added without distortion. Changing contexts demands discipline.

The teachers at the Gwent theatre conference day were faced with the problem of what to include in Private Profitt’s (1) box from the Redbridge materials. They were also handed three prepared documents because of time being so short. One was a family letter enclosed in an envelope, and delivered by hand. This had been prepared by the teachers in the Derbyshire school for use with a class of 7/8-year-old children.

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(1) The spelling Profitt was interchanged on both days because it had been discovered by the staff of the Derbyshire school that an actual Private Profitt had existed and some family memorabilia was available to be placed in the box. These dated from 1917 but the name was no longer in use in the village in 2008.

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This is the copy of the letter:

**By Hand.**

**To - the curators,**

**Derby Art Gallery,**
November 12th.
To the museum and art Gallery curator, Dear Sir,

My husband and I have been cleaning out his grandparents’ house and in the loft we have come across an old box of things which must have belonged to someone in the family who was killed in a battle in the 1914-18 war in Belgium (we think). We wonder whether these memorabilia would be useful for to be kept in the library or the art gallery as they are genuine.

No one in our family quite knows the soldier. We think he may have been the son of a cousin of my husband’s grandfather but are not sure.

Please can you tell us if you can use these things or tell us who else might be interested to have them?

Thankyou.
Yours sincerely
Emily Profitt

ps. the soldier’s name on the box is James Profitt like my husband’s name.

E. Profitt
Shirebrook where the school was situated, and Private Proffitt and his fiancée both lived there prior to 1917 as their genuine photographs revealed when found in the box by the Shirebrook class.

The other two documents were devised by the teachers and DH. Who decided (for good or ill!) that they should be hand written? These two missives indicate two important aspects of documents sent to families from officials. The first “signs” the conventional generalization of regret expressed by distant authorities. It also introduces important period evidence - the house of the prime minister of the time, and those of the Reigning King and Queen during World War I.

Such a document permits a range of relevant but not necessarily central factual information to be included. All these are evidences worthy of being explored through indirection but pointedly placed.

These factors fulfill the quotation in part I from the Saxton/Morgan book. “Distancing is a means of detouring feeling to arrive at feeling”…

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**Ministry of Defence Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB**

**Telephone: Whitehall 1212**

**From the war office**

**Dated December 16th, 1917**

**On behalf of his Majesty’s government**

I regret to inform you that your son, James Proffitt, rifleman- number 49966

King’s Liverpool Regiment B. Company

Number 6 Platoon

Registered missing since November 30th of this year 1917, is now proven to have given his life for King and country while on active service. He was fatally wounded during the Battle of Cambrai.

Their Majesty’s thoughts are with the family of James Proffitt at this time. The King, George V. and his consort, Queen Mary Mourn the sad loss of each one of the brave servicemen who give their lives in the service of protecting our British Empire.

Rest assured that no British soldier is forgotten by their majesty’s government.

Yours faithfully

Lloyd George Prime Minister

“In their lives they were noble. By their death they are ennobled”

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The second contrived communication consisted of a written letter from an officer who knew Private Profitt.

This is personal in tone and permits aspects of the soldier’s personality to be introduced, plus some details of how he died and was cared for. This letter can
suggest not only a measure of comfort for the family but can indicate future
development regarding his place of burial which modern children now know about
because school parties can visit these and identify members of their family who died
long before they were born. Such ‘signs’ all contribute to the reasonableness of being
curious about the contents of his box. They efficiently bring two time spans together.
Finally this document explains how the box has come back from Cambrai to be later
discovered in the attic of the person who has caused for it to be “attended to”.
(See document under) and place appropriately.
These three pieces of paper are obviously crated for precise purpose and the children
should not be misled into thinking they are genuine.
From Platoon Officer, Captain Jonathan Leach (6 Platoon)
King’s Liverpool Regiment.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Profitt,

I write to express my very genuine regret regarding the death of James Profitt your son who was critically wounded during the Battle of Cambrai on December 14th 1917. James was an excellent soldier, and a fine rifleman, one who you can rest assured served his country and fellow soldiers most ably, and indeed, willingly during the time he was in my platoon. James was a thoughtful young man, wise beyond his years, and he never failed in the time I knew him, to live up to the duty and standards of behavior expected of him by the regiments. I personally can attest to his courage in the face of the enemy. His loyalty to his friends in the platoon, his good humour and quiet support in times of tension, as well as during rest times away from the trenches, will be missed by all who served with him and valued him as a friend, be assured he died bravely, and in the days when his life was fought for by the doctors and nurses in the field hospital, he was seen, and healed, always to express his appreciation and thanks to every one of them. A priest was with him when he breathed last, “quietly and without pain”, in the early hours of December 15th 1917. He is buried in grave plot 3752. In due course a permanent marker will be placed so that his name and all regimental details are recorded amongst others who fought beside him. I am arranging to have sent to you, all his personal possessions as soon as may be. In the meantime I hope you will be comforted in the knowledge that Rifleman Profitt gave his life bravely. As his commanding officer I am proud to have had such a fine young man in my platoon. He brought honor to the King’s Liverpool Regiment.

Yours most sincerely,
Jonathan Leach, (Captain)

This dilemma between authentic, genuine and truthful, demands that laser eye which teachers need to bring to bear when context is changed from learning about things to thinking from within responsible points of view involving tasks
which fix the learning through praxis. Doing tasks and recognizing their significance simultaneously.

Private Profitt’s existence is still within the memory time span which can hold evidences of genuine provenance, especially through technology and the internet making it easily accessible. Matters become more complex when earlier, or less evidence exists, to authenticate theories or explanations. Changing contexts by which Romano/ British life can be explored or Egyptian, Greek or Cherokee first nation. American peoples brought into focus requires extra careful discrimination. This will be discussed later, because these distinctions between supposition, genuineness, authenticity and invention for purpose becomes more critical whatever the age of the students. Visitors to theatre performances recognize there is a measure of illusion and need for some of Coleridge’s “willing suspensions of disbelief”. The contexts used when introducing drama elements require the quicksands of proven truth, truthfulness authenticity and invention for purpose, to be entered with discrimination and honest learning endeavours. There is really no excuse these days for teachers to plan thoughtless entry into past times or past lives.

The first choice the Gwent teachers faced was how to establish the point of view from which a class of students would encounter Private Profitt’s box of personal belongings. Various ways were explored. The first could be that teacher and children make a verbal agreement that they would work in their classroom “as if” they did the work of librarians. Most children today are introduced to visiting libraries to borrow books or CD and DVD formats of material. It would only require a short (but not necessarily simple) task to enable a class to bring their own understanding (and that of the teacher) of what libraries are for and how the loon system works. This would make it possible for the collegiate understanding to emerge as the class together wrote (or drew) on a community roll of paper, their response to the statement. “We have libraries so that people can use them to …” This embodies a question in the form of a statement. It is focused but not directive so it leaves students free to complete the statement in any way their personal information dictates and the teacher to gauge some knowledge about the children’s understanding of library provisions. There is opportunity for the teacher to classify their responses but also to add information placing aspects of being a librarian on the sheet.
to be sure people bring their library card when they borrow the books, CDs or DVDs”. “We keep getting new stories for people to come in and listen to”. “People need to know the date they must bring back what they borrow so everyone can share what our library has”. “I like finding reference books when children are doing school projects”.

When the task of writing on the long sheet is accomplished – it should only take as long as the students are engaged – there needs time for browsing so that all can benefit from the range of comments. “Gawping” at this will not do. Children need to be in the position of having to read the comments, so pens in hand they can be empowered to put their own imprint on the paper by ticking things they agree with. This simple factor immediately transforms the paper’s appearance and empowers each person to affect the “picture”. Some will copy behavior but it will stand as evidence later for their library. It is not an examination and that is not pressure for deep consideration or “best” writing. Standing around this library evidence provides that teacher with the opportunity to do that essential shift to “now drama time”. This needs an agreement clause “would you agree that people like us could turn a library like we’ve just put on the sheet” and on an indication of a future interesting encounter with a parcel. “I should think if someone brought a special parcel to us we’d know how to deal with it, wouldn’t you”? These are only indications. The tone and focus would be selected to fit the social health of the class. It can pave the way for the arrival of the box and the commissions to be instigated.

Should a teacher want to go thoroughly into librarianship as a means of starting a Mantle of the Expert with deeper entry into language work, the Gwent teachers considered another approach. This involved some preparations and a task from which the librarian skills could be initiated. How much preparation will depend on how long an immersion into language studies the teacher envisages. If it is to be on “Mantle of the Expert” terms then the “Remembrance” element and Private Profitt's box becomes one episode of many which can focus on language skills. The “remembrance” work can provide tasks which “teach” examining evidence and explaining it to other people.

The time of such work would obviously be selected to coincide with November 11th national observances.

Starting “running a library” expertise can begin as far back as the teacher wishes.
1. **Establishing a community** will require a fictional place to be created and this will involve collaborative map making. The materials used were a large bed sheet on which were placed names of buildings existing to serve a community (post office, library, hotels, services, such as school and health centers, a war memorial (for ‘Remembrance’ work!). Every public building will eventually introduce specific curriculum study. Banks, money, accounting; stores, weights and measures and calculations; travel shops, geography and distances; health centre, appointments & responsibilities regarding diet, medications and child care; canals, rivers, street names, and churches, historical opportunities; tea shop or cafes, Menus and transformation of foods; D.I.Y shop, calculations, materials, tools and functional spaces for living, architecture and style; funeral services and churches and other places of worship, involving ceremonies – births and deaths, marriages and so on. A teacher need only place on the map those indications which lay in invitations to the study they want the children to become engaged with. The map, which can be preserved easily through modern digital camera records, establishes community we live and work in.

If librarianship only need be established then that can efficiently be begun by cards signifying shelving arrangements which children can arrange on a drawn library shelf plan. “Food and Cookery” “Arts” “Poetry”, “Sorties” “Novels” “Crafts” “Hobbies” ‘Computers” “CDs and DVDs” and so on. This is a task which is done from the point of view of librarians planning their own shelving organization and the teacher’s colleague /mentoring language is now critical so that everyone shares in the same responsible point of view of our library, our borrowers, our varied clients’ needs our behavior, skills and attitudes in searching what our clients’ need when they come into their library. The task of arranging shelving can be sufficient to make the contextual shift to now-drama time possible, and foreshadow the arrival of Private Profitt’s box. If this task is used then the commission needs to be launched at a point when all the librarians are busily engaged in some task which gives them some space and time to give full attention to it. The Gwent teachers tried doing this by having our library temporarily closed by a contract of course. This meant creating a task of having to pack up all the shelf contents so that the space could be redecorated and refurnished to be reopened after a short break.
This was contracted into by an agreement that it could be quite reasonable for a village or town council to inform librarians and public of a temporary closure.

(See next page. Place appropriately)
Notice

Temporary Library Closure

The library will close from October 25\textsuperscript{th} (Friday) to Monday November 9\textsuperscript{th} for refurbishment and reorganization. We apologize for inconvenience.

Note: no fines will be imposed on any overdue books while the library is closed.

The library team

Remember any of these contextual shifts require tasks to be done by all students and the teacher's selective style of language to be used appropriately.

Task 1- establishes belonging to a community first, from which will emerge a wide range of focused curriculum studies. (A sheet and card names create investment in a place).

Task 2. Establishes the shelving system and range of librarianship skills in serving the public. (Classification cards and sensible placement so people are guided in their search for information or interests). Using a paper diagram.

Task 3. Creates a reason for having time free to deal with Private Profitt's box. This will involve a November time commission. Teachers choose the context they prefer. Any of the ones given will invoke point of view, responsibility,
ethics and teacher/class collaboration. They all involve the teacher in providing materials to be interrogated and the mentoring position rather than the transmission of information stance.

However librarianship is established the entire evidence about the World War of 1914-1918 has to be contained within the box. By using one soldier as the keyhole a large variety of evidences become available. There are the workaday objects a young soldier must have about him if he is to survive in the conditions. There can be evidence of his interests, his past and current friends. He will need formal identification objects, and memorabilia when links him with home and relatives. Books can indicate interests, hobbies and essential information required by a man in a regiment. So our Private Profitt is a mine of evidence, and extremely coherent because a soldier can have everything about him. But before the contents are assembled some discrimination is essential based on questions which the contributors in Redbridge must have asked themselves as they collected their papers and pens and pencils.

1. Essential items because our young man is a soldier: his identification bracelet and regimental details and number unique to himself amongst the millions of young men assembled into a fighting force. Button and badge cleaning materials.
2. His survival tools: the means to clean his rifle, contain his ammunition, keep his feet dry, his head safe from enemy weaponry, and his bayonet. These would be standard issue, with penalties to be imposed if lost through neglect!
3. There are the means of hygiene: Soap, shaving & washing; tooth brush (& cleaning paste when available) towels and changes of clothing. Most precious may have been pegs and a string washing line, and some kind of water-resistant fabric to keep papers dry; and scissors and combs for hair (and lice).
4. Any means of medication: would become precious as well as mandatory. Standard issue bandages distributed to all soldiers, as well as any useful items donated from home by thoughtful relatives, such as mending & sewing things.
5. **May our Private Profitt have been shortsighted?** If so his spectacles & case may have been found. This involves army rules of recruitment and his regimental position which must be “signed”.

6. There are the standard issue eating tools: plate, cutlery & drinking mug. The list then expands into the questions of Private Profitt’s interests and personality -this is when coherence and economy become essential. The evidence for these aspects of his life provided by the Redbridge teachers was remarkably coherent.

7. Evidence of faith: a prayer book, Gospel of St. Mark, a gifted rosary. Letters to and from a fiancée, one Hilda, together with two rings suggesting leave and a wedding. Evidence of the essential clothing knitted by sister and mother unique to surviving in the trenches. There were a few items kept for sentimental reasons- theatre tickets and a bill for a fish and chip meal at a Lyons corner house, plus letters giving evidence of the home front.

The issue then is, how shall these evidences be presented? Some items must be solid and of authentic appearance. Others presented as documents, with suitable ‘signs’ – aging, fragments, dates and different format revealing origins and purpose. The main problem being availability of objects. Children are surprisingly adept at reading sign, because of the availability of information to them Private Profitt's box enables more than the personal collection however, because once it has arrived at the family home, other materials can have been added simply because it is natural for families to do so.

The final choice of the teachers in the Derbyshire School allowed for a deal of evidence to be logically placed in the box by a loving family. Cuttings from newspapers, the official letters mentioned earlier, photographs and evidence from publications at the time. Many of the actual objects could be manufactured or found from the teacher’s resources. Below is the list which was assembled in the box, and the box itself was an old metal ammunition box much dented, rescued from a garden shed. Everything on this list could be either genuine as to period and source, OR made to appear so by its presentation. The list could be found in the box because evidence of other hands could be incorporated. For example the soldier's possessions at the time of his death had a hand written note attached by the field officer. Items added by the family later were similarly labeled and the children had no difficulty whatsoever in reading these signs. So the keyhole widens the World War I
‘field’. The final collection lay in the hands of the teachers and which aspects of Remembrance they wanted to come into focus. The laws of theatre still apply. Economy. Focus. Truthfulness for purpose.

The list of evidence. Some were ‘found’ by colleagues, some were original, and some were made to appear genuine. Some were gleaned from publications (easily available these days from the internet and publications about the war) and ‘signed’ for relevance. One or two were deliberately enigmatic as you will see. The keyhole entry to ‘Remembrance’ is coherent in every respect, and this is always the final criteria whenever commissions are prepared. The learning dynamic is centered in task, but the elements which bring about the learning are always the same.

Suitable evidence, relationship of teacher/mentor with researching commissioners the disciplined signing of special arrangements to initiate and sustain the nature of any particular task/event, and a minimum of essential signs to change mood and period. This has serious implications regarding teacher education if the Thomas Jefferson systems are to be the basis of classroom practice.

The list comprised of:

- A typed note “Rifleman James Proffit's personal possessions returned to his family by His Majesty’s War Office”.
- 3 war medals in a cardboard box (genuine & precious!) a sewing tin in a linen bag (made up for purpose). A ring in a leather box (bought from a gift shop with a glass “Ruby”) cheap!
- 2 “wedding rings” (from same source fixed to a card and labeled “when Hilda and I get married”). (See appendix)
- A book of school poems (“given by Hilda to James with fond love”).
- A novel “Beau Geste” (old and battered with “to James on his birthday” dated May 1910).
- A geography schoolbook. (Genuine, with details of British Empire on maps).
- First aid bandages (issued the Home Guard in W. W. II but still suitably authentic)
- 2 warn laundered men’s cotton handkerchiefs.
- Some authentic linen buttons stitched on a card. (Labeled – “James, you’ll need these for your vests” mother).
- A mirror in a leather case. (Worn by much use).
A wooden handled steel knife (sold by cobblers still)
A blue lead pencil (aged).
A buttonhook from a sewing box-steel.
An oval magnifying glass in a small box.
A pair of small scissors in metal.
A genuine hair “mourning” brooch in a little leather bag. (Stitched up for purpose).
A round compass in metal case.
Some metal tweezers.
An old book of garden flowers (with some pages marked in pencil as if by the owner).
A bone shoehorn.
An old book of “common prayer” with “James Proffit” written in pencil and a date 1915.
An old leather clasp purse with an old penny and a sixpence inside.
A pebble in a little bag.
A genuine photograph of James Proffit.
A genuine photograph of his fiancée Hilda Beliren. (See appendix)
A metal nail file and a steel “nit” comb.
A small piece of dried up brown soap.
A little knitted bag with letters inside from sister, father, mother, his fiancée and friends, some of whom were fellow soldiers. Envelopes, paper and dates correct in time and appearance.
Two plaited bands of straw “to be tied on my left and right legs when doing marching drill” (these were made up, but such objects were issued in the first world war so that soldiers felt their left and right legs when drilling)
A crumpled letter to James Profitt. No envelope.
In addition were added a collection of contemporary envelopes placed together by “art gallery archivists” correctly dated with suitably “signed” contents.
• “Letter from Profitt family gifting the archive”
• “Photographs of James Profitt and his fiancée. He is wearing his dress army uniform.”
• Two letters, never posted, written from the front dated December 1917.
• “From librarian” photographs included in archive - “unknown persons – friends of James Profitt?”
• “From librarian – photographs found in poor condition. Have photocopied and mounted for handling. Perhaps collected by family because relevance to army conditions” (these are in the appendix to this paper).
I can quite understand any teacher feeling daunted by sheer investment of time and effort in preparing the evidence for “Remembrance” but consider two things. There will be no need of any further information because the box strategy enables. Published evidence to be included by family and archivists.

All the learning and realization of knowledge will be achieved by the variety of interactive tasks arranged by teacher/class contracts. This is built in to the whole structure of case study, accuracy of resources and requirement to published display and prepare lectures for other classes and parents at an appropriate time in the year. The symbol of poppies is expanded into experience because respect, empathy and caring are essential aspects of every task. These are the fixing elements which bond experience into meaningful memory.

But, take heart, not all mantles and commissions require such elaborate preparation. The drama element places a wide range of resources in the teacher’s toolbox. The high skill is in using “theatre sign” to preserve contextual shifts so that every element is coherently placed in places of doing tasks.

1. Changing space and objects to create “place” so tasks become experiential rather than reliant on memory and theories.
2. Drawing on the experiences of the students and teacher as the curriculum drives the tasks.
3. Preparing the case - study precisely focused on the learning intention.
4. Using all the role opportunities the drama makes it reasonable to employ. This permits teachers to break out of the conventional class encounters by contracting each role encounter. Children are remarkably responsive as soon as now-immediate time is invoked when roles enter circumstances.
5. The big range of conventions by which class and teacher can encounter “others” to serve the leaning.
6. Highly selective language applicable to the nature of each task. This involves preserving the point of view, supporting the power of students to own the work and access the materials.

Perhaps the best image is to keep in mind Joan Littlewood’s description regarding making theatre as being akin to a market place always active in process of becoming so that meaning emerges to fulfill purpose. Quite suitable as a description of a classroom when all participants are involved in “Mantle” or “Commission” case studies.

Finally a few examples of contexts to give students entry into times more distant than “Remembrance” and World War I. Each one will draw upon evidence and careful presentation to establish point of view and requirement to realize knowledge through some form of publication. All have been tested with students of appropriate age.

1. The Romans and the occupation of Britain (8 year olds)

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Curriculum to be studied: Tribal and Roman Culture.

Resources for evidence. Rich variety of imaginative illustration as well as site access and photographs. Museum artifacts and writings from the period. “Keyhole” Context - a request from deceased person encountered though a will, asking that a Roman Theme Park be established to help visitors understand what life was like for the Britons and the Romans during the period 55 BC to 200 AD.

The only sustained role required Boudicca of the Iceni people signed by a length of purple cloth. Predominant point of view, Roman, and Mantle – we create them parks for clients.

2. Life in Ancient Egypt (16-18 year olds)

Curriculum. Geography of Egypt. Court and peasant lives. Myths and Resources of the country. Time and pharaohs.

Resources. Photographs, museum artifacts. Much writing – contemporary sources and modern research. Novels with historical accuracy as well as imaginative reconstructions of events. Poetry of the times.

Keyhole context. The government of Egypt wishes to host the next Olympic games after 2012 and they are requesting a reputed firm of hair dressers and wig makers to devise the opening and closing ceremonies to illustrate. “Life in Ancient Egypt”.

Sustained point of view. High-class hairdressers.

Commission model.

3. The Cherokee 1st nation people and “The Trail of Tears”

4. Age of student's primary or secondary.

Curriculum: Contemporary results of pressure on territories using the Land Enclosures in Britain as model.

Resources: American historical accounts and museum records regarding “the Trail of Tears”.

Keyhole Context: a curator from the Cherokee museum (which exists) is asking if a group of English students could devise a way by which contemporary Americans visiting the museum might appreciate the lives of the Cherokee peoples and the effects of “The Trail of Tears” upon their contemporary national ethos.

Sustained point of view: we have museums in England and we know there have been changes in land usage in Britain.

Commission model.

Steve Krause in his blog (www.Stevekrauseblog2007/10/review) refers to Shaffer and his assertions about schooling to the effect that school is a game about thinking like a factory worker, with right and wrong answers and following instructions understood by teachers but not necessarily by their students in order to pass tests by recalling answers. Maybe this discourse may reassure us that there are other models worth considering so that our students can engage with real tasks which provoke the
essential life skills of knowing when to think, how to think and realize that learning in school may be akin to growing a great branching beanstalk of a plant which will entwine living to learn and learning to live throughout a lifetime of challenges after formal schooling is over.

My thanks again to the Redbridge and Gwent teachers who so willingly subscribed to this paper.

Dorothy Heathcote
What follows can be placed as an appendix.
Our rifles are of Japanese make, but some others are to be served out for firing - the Lee - Enfield type.

No I am not ill. Indeed they tell me I look much better; and indeed I must be pretty strong for neurasthenia.

Yesterday I was on from 8.15 - 12.15, 3.5 - 7.15 and then we had an alarm and turned out at 11 not to get back till 2.15.

The ordinary day is:
- 6.45 - 7.30
- 8.45 - 12.30
- 2.00 - 4.30

This I do and am never very tired, though during last night’s alarm I marched in a sort of dream. But this fatigue was healthy and not nervous exhaustion the feed has been wretched. But now it better half my money has gone on extra feed, chief meat, a substance considered in the Army to be composed entirely of fat, bone and gristle. I bully beef when it becomes too annoying. We may leave here for Chelmsford any day; and from Chelmsford perhaps - who knows? To the Dardanelles. There are rumours…

Well, this is all about myself, but the details about army life are from the inside, and chiefly, about to inside. I do not at all forget you Pa and Ma, kit Winnie and the exuberant Mackie. Not by no means. E rifles, boots, and buttons need cleaning: coats need rolling, clothes brushing: and there are night operations, street pickets, fire pickets, and guards to be done.

May you all be happy and healthy and wealthy and wise - more is every day. Good - bye all of you Easter is near; and after then. I am no more an organist.

I am so sorry that you have had so wretched a time it so unprofitable a game. It is hard lines on one who would like to live life to be cooped up in bed and see the clouds drift and do nothing and be nothing of importance.

Of course I forgive the lecture. It was deserved. Though not so much as you think perhaps. The nice long evenings, are occasionally filled up with army duties, such as guard, street picket, night operations, fatigue. And last Monday we marched 17 miles, hunted for billets, and at 7.30 when I was about to go in, I was collared for duty and got two hours sleep, and on duty all next day, besides, unlike yourself I hate writing.

Those 17 miles was with the pack - that is, about 40 lbs to carry.

We shall be here till Monday week, but whether I can get leave or no is doubtful. Of course I do not mean my 48 hours leave which would be spent in Gloucester - but leave till 12 at night. Not this Saturday anyway, but perhaps next. I am on guard. Please thank Micky for her letter. It was just like the dear rascal, and I wish I were back to lose to Arthur and Winifred Emma the champion once again.

I wish you all were not so good to me. I like my friends to be willing to give to me in proportion to what myself would give, and you are all too generous in affection and otherwise.

Hoping you is better now, with love to all I remain.

I should have replied to that P.C. but never got it some of my things have gone away to a man in this company named J. Garvey, and he forgot to let me have it. I have not yet thanked you for the writing case - which is charming, not the pipe lighter. Which is very useful on a march - especially in a wind.

I hope the family is all right now and jolly and reveling in ping-pong tournaments galore. I am afraid you will not see me this side of the war. Leave is very difficult to get, and as I was sick a short time at home it must be spent there; if I get any at all. Tomorrow the Foreign Service men do their firing: those who pass the lest may be at the front any time soon. Our first 5 (of which we are the reserve) may go at any time, and reserves are not kept waiting long in this war.

I am very sorry, but everything has turned out a failure. On the last two Saturdays I have been inoculated and on guard, and the few hours I hoped for either yesterday or today have not been granted. I should have written before; but camp has been
very hard, and when there was any spare time it was spent on the flat of my back. Reveille 5 Breakfast 6.30 Dinner 9.30
Tea 4.30 5.0, and on all the time between those hours.

I am sorry not to have written, but always hoped to be able to let you know I was able to get a Saturday pass. Hope you will
all enjoy Perran.

You’re affectionately

No present could have given me more pleasure than this one. The very best, and will no doubt save me much trouble. We
have just come out of trenches after a strafe that a man who had been through loo described as being worse than loo while it lasted.
Well it is as well to do the thing properly. I am glad to be out of it glad to have been through it and the Glosters are a good
crowd, bless ‘em but it seems doubtful whether I should ever see High Wycombe again. I think 6 inches or so lower would have
given much opportunity for damage to 10 high explosives. Which burst about 30 yards behind us. I had my eye, or part of it
round the corner of the bay, and it was a line sight. Also I was as cool as now, writing this letter; this suits me, but it don’t put
my belly right, or make me less introspective, confound it! All I wished for was to play the G minor prelude from part II – Bach. When it was all over. But there was only those brick biscuits to chew. I hope my generous benefactress you are pretty well
and kicking fairly strongly. I hope for a nice blight to come and see you all before long.

Yours affectionately
My Dear Chapman,

Well, life is distinctly harder here than at Gloucester. 1st parade 7-7.45 Physical Drill 2nd 9-12.45 Drill, 2-4.30 Drill. Hard work too, but I hang on and hope for the best. I think I shall come through. If it tires me, it tires the other recruits also; so I don't care.

I was going to send my billet address, but that is forbidden. And besides, I did not like my first billet and have now changed it. You may expect an army biscuit by post soon. Personally, I rather like them, and though they are terrifically hard, hot tea alters that.

I hope everybody is well and out of bed, and - oh yes, did Arthur get his Sherlock Holmes, and has he liked them? I could not find the one supposed to be left at home.

How is the ping-pong, and the hockey, and Moses and all? My thoughts go back to High Wycombe and the ping-pong tournaments and all with pleasure, and the conviction that I should not be as well now if it were not for that.

I think there is no danger of my breaking down, and a large prospect of my becoming much better, think the lord, and paid a bob a day for it. Too!

He's gone, and all our plans are useless indeed.

We'll walk no more on Cotswold where the sheep feed quietly, and take no heed.

His body that was so quick is not as you knew it, on Severn River under the blue driving our small boat through.

You would not know him now but still he died nobly so cover him over with violets of pride purple from sever side.

Cover him, cover him soon! And with thick set masses of memorized flowers. Hide that red wet thing I must somehow forget.

Were worth going far to meet and they sing their old songs. Picture my joy.

I regret to say that the Army sees to it that one has enough money on leave by dishing out only 5 francs a week to us. And that irregularly. We get also but a quarter loaf of bread, but the French bread is excellent in great round slabs. Very grateful after the drier Army bread is its dampness and yielding quality, the chocolate is excellent and the people very kind. It is surprising to see everything as usual very well within reach to the guns. They used to shell the villages but do not seem to now.

There is quite a fine church a few yards from me shattered but still noble, and under the shadow of it the estaminets are doing good trade - maybe with windows shattered. The children play; and the country a mile or so behind the firing line is green and peaceful as our dear England's.

A Bon santé of all, but more especially of Messieurs Arthur and Le Pere.

Yours affectionately
Well we landed at one of the noblest what do I say, the noblest town it has been my good fortune to see; I hope to speak to you of it someday. But we had not long to stay there or anywhere till we were marched here and put in trenches with another battalion for instruction. They were Welsh. Mostly, and personally I feared a rather rough type, but oh the joy, I crawled into a dugout, not high but fairly large, lit by a candle, and so met four of the most delightful young men that could be met anywhere. Thin faced and bright eyed, their faces showed beautifully against the soft glow of the candlelight, and their musical voices delightful after the long march at attention in silence. There was no sleep for me that night. I made up next day a little, but what then? We talked of welsh folksong. Of George Borrow, of Burns, of the RCM, of - yes - of Oscar Wilde, Omar Khayyam, Shakespeare, and of the war: distant from us by 300 yards. Snipers were continually firing, and rockets - fairy lights they call them fired from a pistol - lit up the night outside.

Every now and again a distant rumble of guns to remind us of the reason we were foregathered. They spoke of their friends dead or maimed in the bombardment. A had one, of the night before, and in the face of their grief it sat there and for once self-forgetful, more or less, gave them all my love for their tenderness, their steadfastness and kindness to raw fighters and very raw signalers. Well we had two days like that, and played Auction Bridge, talked, read, smoked, and went through a trench - mortar strafe together.

Once we were standing outside our dugout cleaning mess tins, when a cuckoo sounded its call from the shattered wood at the back. What could I think of but Framilode, Minister worth, Grantham, and the old haunts of home.

This Welshman turned to me passionately, Listen to that damned bird, he said. All through that bombardment in the pauses I could hear that infernal silly "Cuckoo, Cuckoo" sounding while Owen was lying in my arms covered with blood. How shall I ever listen again …. He broke off, and I became aware of shame at the unholy joy that filled my artist's mind. And what a fine thin keen face he had and what a voice - for speaking I mean. Gibson may have had this same thought as he listened to the cuckoo this spring. Shakespeare also maybe -.

Word of fear
Unpleasing to a soldier's ear....

Is this a picture of friends of James Proffitt?
Why is one wearing a uniform and the other wearing a suit?
Why does the one wearing the uniform have big boots on?
What is the building behind is the piece of wood propping something up.
France
November 14
Dear Mum, Dad, Jane and William,

It has been fairly quiet here recently thank goodness, although it is very cold. Tell Janie that her mittens and balaclava are very welcome. Last week one of my best mates was killed and he left me this very interesting book. It tells you all sorts of things about the world. I don’t know quite what to do about it, but I’ll be ok to show you, when I come home which I hope will be soon!

From your loving son and Brother James.

P.S. Please could you send me more pencils. I’ve only got a couple of stubs left.

75, Lonsdale Street
Bradford
October 28th 1917

Dear James,

We hope this letter arrives safely with the mittens are Balaclava that your big sister Janie has hit for you. We are all keeping well. Dad is working all hours at the munitions factory, but we know this helps you boys out there.

Your cousin Joe Helliwell has just gone to France, perhaps you will see him. We do hope you will get home to see us all soon, we miss you James.

All out love to you
From mum, Dad, Jane and William xxx

Dearest, I have bought our rings
Hilda Bahrens
Your loving James
(From Librarian 2 genuine rings are in safe Keeping when needed)

Rifleman James E. Proffitt
No. 49966
1/6 Ring Liverpool Regt
B. Coy No 6 Platoon
Missing since
Nov 30th. 1917
An authentic postcard

Derby Museums Service
The Roundhouse
Council Street
Date May 19th 2009

From the Curator’s Office
I am arranging for an interesting box to be stored in your library as we are so overcrowded here. Your library may find it useful if you ever do exhibitions around the time of the armistice (November 11th 1918 - the original date). We think schools may be interested as I believe the children study WW’s I and II. Please look after all the contents very carefully when handling and/or making displays. Everything inside the box has belonged to a family in the village at the time of the great war of 1914-1918, and is donated to the museum’s service.

Yours sincerely,
Jane Smith