

The Second World War through the eyes of Biggin Hill children

Workshop Overview

Workshop statement

In this relatable and explorative workshop KS2 students will work as a team to discover more about the impact of the Second World War upon the children of Biggin Hill. Hands-on objects will bring stories to life helping children to engage and empathise with real Second World War experiences.

Curriculum links

History

- A local history study.
- A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 – a significant turning point in British history (Battle of Britain).

Geography

- Geographical skills and fieldwork.

English

- Explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary.

Supplies list

- Pencils
- Clipboards if required
(www.educationsupplies.co.uk)
(www.tts-group.co.uk)

Laminated items: (One per class)

- Geoff Greensmith – Then
- Geoff Greensmith – Now
- Scavenger Info Card – Cannon Shell
- Scavenger Info Card – Gun Cover Fragment
- Scavenger Info Card – Compass
- Scavenger Info Card – Escape Bar
- Object Handling Activity Card - Gas Mask Page 1
- Object Handling Activity Card - Gas Mask Page 2
- Object Handling Activity Card - ARP Warden Helmet
- Object Handling Activity Card - Gas Rattle
- Object Handling Activity Card - Piece of Shell Shrapnel

Printed items:

(One per student)

- Scavenger Hunt Activity (Chapel Map)
- Scavenger Hunt Activity (Answers)
- Object Handling Activity Sheet

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Lesson Plan + Delivery Information

You will need:

- Scavenger info cards
- 'Scavenger hunt' activity sheets
- Pencils for students
- 4 object handling items and matching interpretation cards
- Object handling activity sheets
- 4 tables covered in army blankets
- A3 images of Geoff Greensmith (then and now)
- Tablet/ laptop, external speaker and audio clip
- Example object labels

Preparing for the session:

- Disperse scavenger info cards around the chapel
- Prepare enough scavenger hunt activity sheets for all
- Prepare enough object handling activity sheets for all

Learning outcomes

Understand that the Battle of Britain took place over months, not on a single day

Become aware of the impact of the Second World War on the children of Biggin Hill

1. Welcome and introduction (5 minutes):

Q: What do we mean by the 'Battle of Britain'?

During the Second World War between July and October 1940, there was a series of huge battles fought in the air. This was fight between the British Royal Air Force (RAF for short) and the German air force known as the Luftwaffe.

Germany had already taken control of many parts of Europe, but Hitler knew that to defeat Britain they needed to take on the RAF.

Q: What was significant about Biggin Hill?

Many aeroplanes used in the Battle of Britain took off from the Biggin Hill airbase and this made the area a very dangerous place to live. The Luftwaffe wanted to destroy airbases like Biggin Hill and many 'dog fights' took place in the skies above.

Q: Why were children living in Biggin Hill during this dangerous time?

Family work commitments | born here | will not or cannot move away | children not evacuated from here as it was considered 'safe countryside'.

Q: What might children have

experienced?

Dog fights in the sky | aeroplane crashes | bombs and explosions | blackouts | air raid shelters | loss of family members.

Q: How would children feel during this time?

Scared | excited | nervous | curious.

Action

Play audio clip of Geoff Greensmith.
Show A3 images of Geoff – 'Then and Now'.

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Lesson Plan + Delivery Information Continued...

2. Scavenger hunt (15 minutes):

Explain what shrapnel is or could be, then introduce the 'Scavenger Hunt' activity..

“ Dotted around the chapel are Second World War scavenger items in the form of information cards. Using your 'Scavenger Hunt Activity Sheet', work in pairs to record the coordinates of each item that you find and answer the mystery question.

Action

At the end of the activity go through the questions and get the students to mark their own sheets.

3. Object handling (15 minutes):

- ARP Warden helmet
- Piece of shell shrapnel found in the area
- Gas rattle
- Baby gas mask

Split students into 4 groups and give one handling object and matching interpretation card to each group.

Give out an object handling activity sheet to each student.

“ Your task is to find out as much as possible about the object. You will then perform a short team presentation to tell the rest of the class all about it.

Using the interpretation resources, students will answer questions about their handling object within their group. This will help them to create a presentation about their object. Teams will also create a museum information label for this object. They will need to think carefully about the wording of the label and how it will attract attention.



4. Group presentations (15 minutes):

Each group will present the information about their object and will add the object and label to the museum display table.

Geoff Greensmith – Then



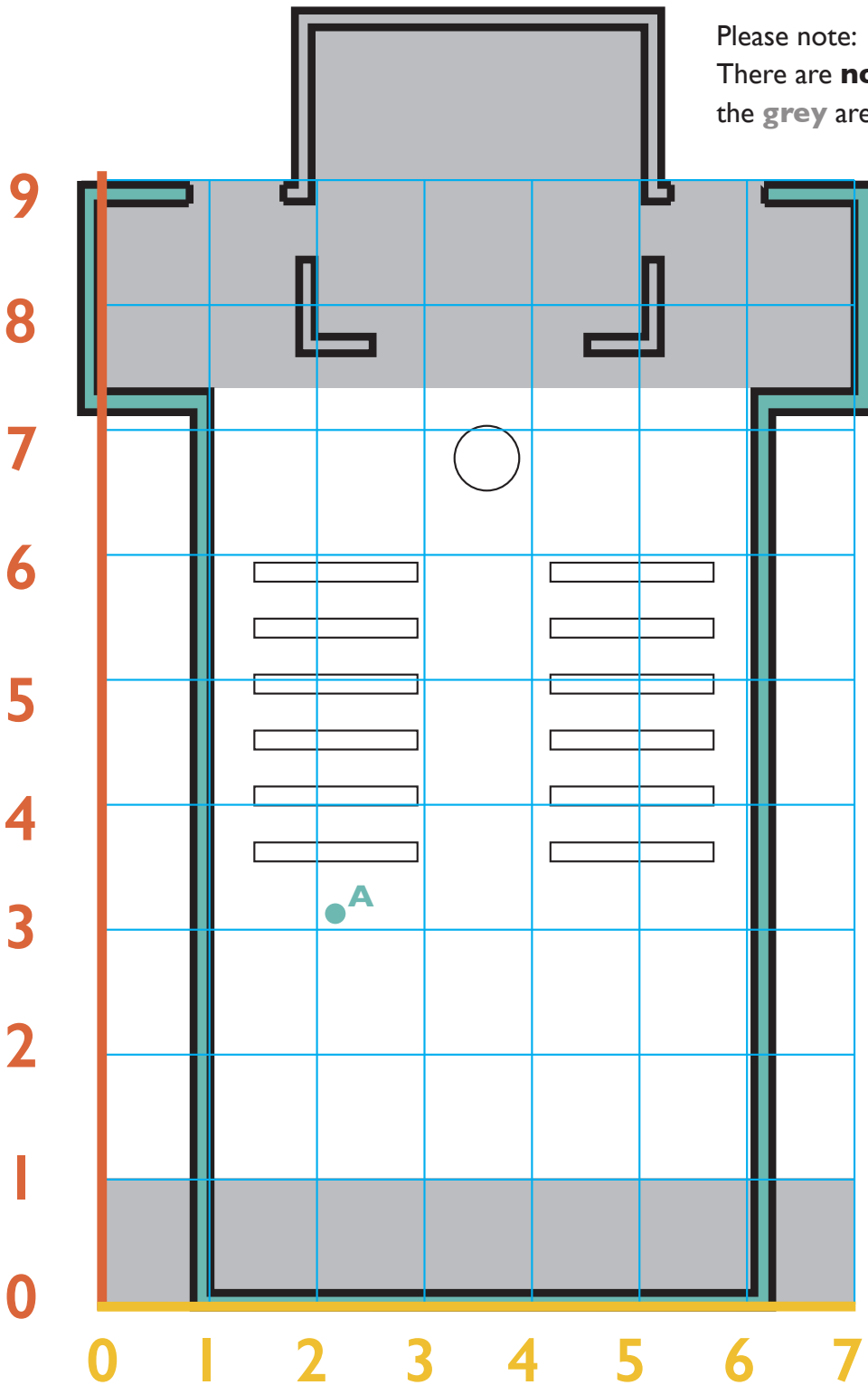
Geoff Greensmith – Now



Scavenger Hunt Activity

Use this grid to help you to plot the coordinates of the scavenger hunt objects in the chapel.





Please note:
There are **no** objects hidden in the **grey** areas.



A point on a grid has 2 numbers to identify its position. This is called a coordinate.

Coordinates are written as the number of steps across first, then the number of steps up.

For example:
Point A = (2,3)

Object	Coordinates	Question
		<p>What did Geoff's father do for a living?</p>
		<p>What part of the Hurricane aircraft did the fabric cover ?</p>
		<p>What vehicle did this compass come from?</p>
		<p>What was this tool used for?</p>

Cannon Shell



After an air raid, Geoff enjoyed scavenging for interesting objects in the fields around Biggin Hill. Geoff lived there because his father ran the Nightingale Cafe.

Gun Cover Fragment



Geoff would often sit near the airfield to watch the re-arming of aircraft. An aircraft-man gave him this piece of gun cover fabric which was used to cover the gun holes on the wings of Hurricanes.

Compass



Geoff and his friends liked to find interesting objects scattered in the fields around Biggin Hill.

This is a compass from a Spitfire.

Escape Bar



Geoff discovered this object near to Biggin Hill.
If a pilot crashed his Spitfire and could not get out,
he would use the escape bar to force the
canopy open.

Using the information cards, find out as much as you can about the object on your table.

Your group task is to tell the rest of your class about what you have discovered.

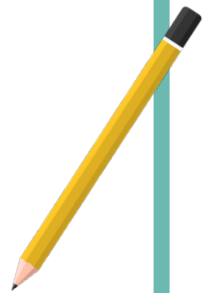
Your presentation should last for 1 to 2 minutes. Try to think about how this object might have affected children in Biggin Hill during the Second World War. You could even act out a simple performance using this object.

Things to think about:

- Who did this object belong to or where did it come from?
- Why was it used?
- Why might a child have seen or used this object?

What are you going to say or do in the presentation?

Write your ideas here:



Use this space to design and write a **museum label** for the object.

Remember to keep your label clear and simple.

Think about how your label will look and how it will attract attention.

Gas Mask - Page 1

The British Government gave everyone a gas mask in case the Germans dropped **poisonous gas bombs** on Britain.

It was the responsibility of Air Raid Precaution Wardens to make sure that everybody had been issued with a gas mask. Posters reminded people to carry their gas mask at all times. People got into trouble if they were caught without their gas masks.

This gas mask was for babies up to two years old. They were placed inside the mask so that they could see through the visor, the canvas was then wrapped around the babies body and the straps fastened between the babies legs. The canvas was coated with rubber to stop the gas seeping through the fabric.

There was a filter on the side of the mask to absorb the poisonous gas. Attached to this is a concertina shaped tube with a handle, this was pushed up and down to pump a supply of air into the mask.

It is not certain if these would have worked well enough in a real-life situation. Thankfully, a gas attack did not occur.



Gas Mask - Page 2

Name: Arthur Sheppeck

Arthur Sheppeck lived near Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain as a child. He said that school children sometimes had to test out their gas masks in a gas filled ARP van.



Here is what Arthur remembers about testing the gas masks at school:

“You’d have to put your gas masks on and climb up into the van. They closed the door and they put gas in there. If there was a leak on your gas mask you’d find tears running down your face and you couldn’t breathe. After a couple of minutes they’d usher you out and you’d have to do a lap of the playground and then back to your classrooms.”

Things to think about...

- What would it be like to wear a gas mask?
- What if you had a baby brother or sister – how could you help them?
- Would you remember to carry your gas mask around with you?



ARP Warden Helmet

ARP stands for **Air Raid Precautions**.

ARP Wardens were dedicated to protecting people from the danger of air raids.

Their job covered a range of duties such as:

- Sounding the air raid siren
- Making sure everyone was safely in their air raid shelters
- Helping to rescue people who were injured or trapped
- Making sure that everyone had their gas masks
- Reporting bomb damage
- Making sure that everyone turned off their lights during a blackout



ARP wardens were given steel helmets to provide protection from debris and shrapnel. They also provided a form of identification – people could ask the wardens for help and assistance.

Things to think about...

- Imagine a day in the life of an ARP Warden at Biggin Hill
- What challenges might you face?
- What sort of people might you meet during your time on duty?



Gas Rattle

The British government were very concerned about the possibility of the Germans dropping poisonous gas bombs on Britain.



Air Raid Precaution Wardens were supplied with noisemaking gas rattles like this one to give the warning of a gas attack or for a gas mask drill.

The warden would hold the handle and spin the rattle around in the air making a loud clicking noise.

To tell people that it was all clear they would ring a bell.



Things to think about...

- How would you feel if you heard the gas rattle?
- Imagine you were in school during a gas mask drill – what might have happened?



Piece of Shell Shrapnel

What: Anti-aircraft shell nose cone

Size: 3.7 inch

After a dog fight or air raid, the land around Biggin Hill was scattered with pieces of shrapnel from damaged aircraft and explosive devices/shells.

This is a piece of the nose cone from an anti-aircraft shell which was found on waste-ground near Biggin Hill airfield.



Anti-aircraft shells contained a timer so that once fired, if they did not make contact with an aircraft, they would explode in the air causing damage to nearby aircraft or creating a diversion.

As well as pilots being hurt or killed by anti-aircraft shells, many other people were wounded by shells and other shrapnel falling to the ground.

Things to think about...

- Imagine your were on the ground witnessing a dogfight in the sky up above. How would you describe what you see?

