

Hard Vrocht Grun Project

# Work, Food and Poverty in Wartime



## TOPIC



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund





The 'Hard Vrocht Grun' is an Aberdeenshire Council project supported by Heritage Lottery Fund to create educational resources based on locally held heritage material about the effect of World War One on the NE of Scotland for Secondary schools.

The Hard Vrocht Grun is a Doric phrase meaning 'hard worked / wrought ground'; this is not only a term used in the region to describe the harshness of farming the land but is also a metaphor used to describe the difficulties of winning ground on the battlefields of Europe and Mesopotamia.

The project is orchestrated by the Heritage Education Partnership (HEP), which comprises officers from: Archives, Libraries, Registrars, Museums, Arts Development and Education (Secondary schools).

David Atherton, Arts Education Officer, February 2014

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their help and assistance in producing these resource packs.

**Douglas Roberts, Educational Consultant**, for researching, developing, and producing the resource packs

**Helen Taylor from Fyvie Heritage** (for research and source material from Fyvie),

**Diane May** (for research and source material from Stonehaven),

**Sandy Riddell and Aingeal Clare** (for research in Parish Council records)

**Stonehaven Heritage Society** (for postcard images)

**W**ork, Food and Poverty are universal themes in history. The first responsibility of a government is to ensure its people are safe and fed, and in the First World War this responsibility became divided and strained by the needs of hundreds of thousands of soldiers on active duty overseas. The country continued to need food supplies, people to run its essential services, and to preserve the life those soldiers hoped to return to when the war was over.

The War created an enormous strain on food production and supply. The authorities attempted to manage the shortage of food through measures such as rationing and extra production, public education in cookery with limited ingredients and encouraging people to grow their own food. As the War progressed food prices rose and supply dwindled, leading to greater poverty, and poorer diet for most in society by 1918.

The loss of thousands of young men to active War service overseas had an immediate impact on the world of work in Aberdeenshire, especially agriculture and small businesses. The fishing restrictions along the East Coast meant that the communities that relied on fishing for their work and livelihoods had to find alternative ways to survive at a time before the welfare state.

The system of local Poor Relief, intended to assist those in extreme poverty, came under huge pressure. 'Work of national importance' took priority over other work, requiring people to travel and make sacrifices.

After the War men returned to find a country weakened and altered, ill-equipped to receive them back and provide them with work, housing and security. The men who survived the War were often damaged physically and psychologically and struggled to return to the lives they had had.

This unit of work explores these aspects of the First World War experience in Aberdeenshire through original source materials and the experiences of individuals.

## Task overview

Your task in this topic is to create a presentation about an aspect of Work, Food and Poverty in World War One. You will do this with a small group working in collaboration.

The purpose of your presentation is to help your audience understand the social and economic landscape of Aberdeenshire before the First World War, and how the War affected people's jobs and incomes, their diet and the availability of food, and social attitudes towards the poor.

To prepare for this you will study original source materials from the period, using research questions to decide what further investigation you will do, and how you will present your findings.

You will undertake further research with the assistance of Library, Archive, Museum and Registrar services, together with local historians, your teacher and other experts who are available to you.

You may find some of the handwriting unfamiliar but with a little perseverance you will find the writing similar to what we use today and you may also find it useful to copy out any difficult word - this should help you decipher the text. Discussing difficult words in groups and with your teacher is also helpful.

### **Your work is in three stages:**

#### Stage 1:

- Research the document extracts activity and discuss the question
- Research the document bundles provided for this topic and discuss the research questions for each bundle
- Choose an area that interests your group for further research
- Decide provisionally on what form of presentation you will use, and what further research you need to undertake to create your presentation successfully. (You can make a definite decision about the presentation once you've done the research)

#### Stage 2:

- Devise up to three questions that your further research will answer. This will help to focus your work
- Research your chosen area of the topic in more depth using the resources available and record your findings. Use your research questions to keep your work relevant. All your research should be based on original sources
- Make a final decision, in consultation with your teacher, on what form your presentation will take

#### Stage 3

- Create your presentation, ensuring that everyone in the group makes a contribution
- Make your presentation available to your audience

## Researching the topic

Aberdeenshire in the early years of the 20th century was largely agricultural and rural. People lived and worked in the same areas for generations, running or working in small business and trades, labouring on farms and in the fishing industry. People's diet was simple and remained much the same from week to week, year to year.

The First World War brought powerful changes to this settled world. Thousands of men left their homes and work in Aberdeenshire to fight, and many of them didn't return. Their absence left land needing workers, businesses struggling to survive, families without incomes, and restrictions on fishing brought an entire industry to a standstill.

Women stepped into many of the working roles left by men who had gone to War, and this permanently changed the society of North East Scotland.

This topic pack contains several document bundles, which are collections of original materials from the time of the War related to particular aspects of Work, Food and Poverty. Each document bundle has a set of research questions for you to discuss in your group. This discussion should help you decide what aspect of the topic you will research in more detail, and what further questions to ask.

When you have decided what further research you will undertake, there are several sources of original material and expertise available for you to use.

- Local Archives
- School, Local and Regional libraries
- Registrars Service
- Museums Service
- Local history organisations

*A description of the resources available from each of these sources is included with the topic pack.*

You can request specific information from staff in these organisations, and use their expertise to deepen your understanding of the material you are researching.

## Presenting your work

You will present your research as a group. The purpose of your presentation is to help your audience understand an aspect of how the War affected people's jobs and incomes, their diet and the availability of food, and social attitudes towards the poor.

In your research you will select and focus on the aspect of the topic that interests your group, or even on particular case studies of individuals whose lives changed because of the War.

There are several different ways you can create the presentation of your research. You should discuss with your teacher which of these might be suitable for your group, and what time and resources are available with which to create it.

Options include:

- A computer/screen-based presentation using e.g. PowerPoint including text, images, sounds and spoken words. This might be used to illustrate a live talk from members of the group
- A computer/screen-based interactive website including text, images, sounds and spoken words or short video clips spoken to camera or showing discussion or re-enactment
- A short dramatised presentation involving members of the group as characters enacting an aspect of the topic, or debating the issues, or reporting events. Any storyline should be based clearly on actual events backed up by evidence from original sources
- A list of other options is provided further on in this unit, and you should discuss with your teacher what form of presentation might be appropriate for your group, given the resources and time available

## Document extracts activity

Some extracts from original documents related to Work, Food and Poverty are provided on the following two pages.

Look through these extracts and consider what you can deduce from them about changes to traditional sources of work, and supplies of food during World War One.

In your group, discuss the following questions and write your conclusions on the sheets provided.

### **Document Extracts group questions:**

- In what ways do you think the War affected farming ? Why ?
- Why do you think fishing was 'stopped in the middle of the harvest' ? How did this affect towns like Rosehearty ?
- Why do you think the newspaper is publishing these recipes ? What do the ingredients tell you about food supplies in 1918 ?
- Why were children working in farming and forestry ? How do you think this changed their view of the War, and their role in society ?

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## CHILDREN AS FARM WORKERS.

At a meeting of the Directors of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture and Associated Societies, held at Glasgow last week, the secretary explained that the Board of Agriculture had approached the Scottish Education Department for the purpose of encouraging School Boards to allow children away from school at times convenient for farm work. The Board indicated that the Education Department had given no encouragement, and stated that the matter would be left in the hands of the School Boards. Mr A. T. Macdonald pointed out that School Boards were considering the matter, and arranging the holidays to suit the work. Mr C. M. Douglas explained that School Boards had power to deal with such applications when they come.

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Extract from the Mearns Leader newspaper 11th June 1915

Extract from a letter from Rosehearty Town Clerk about the effects of fishing restrictions 11th August 1914

*amalgamate within the County. We were expecting to hear from you regarding the matter. I may just state that being almost entirely a fishing community are struck very badly through the fact of the fishing having to be stopped in the middle of their harvest, and also from the fact that fishermen have not been paid for the work they have done. I do not think we will be able to do very much, as a matter*



The fisher girls from the coast towns of the north-east have solved the problem of unemployment by taking work in the mills of Dundee. Our photograph shows a group of girls from Fraserburgh and other places who have left home to seek a livelihood in Juteopolis.

Extract from the People's Journal newspaper 10th July 1915

## Economic Cookery Recipes.

### POTAO SUET PASTRY.

Ingredients.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. flour,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. cooked potatoes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teasp. baking powder, cold water if necessary, 2 oz. of suet, or 1 oz. suet and 1 oz. of nuts.

Method.—Mix flour, baking powder and potatoes. Add suet chopped and mix to a stiff dough using water if necessary.

### RICE AND CHEESE PIE.

Ingredients.—2 oz. cooked rice. 1 oz. grated cheese, little sauce or milk, pepper and salt, potato short paste.

Method.—Mix rice and cheese together and add sauce and seasoning. Line pie-dish or tin with potato short paste. Prick foot and place in mixture (level with top of tin). Cover with a lid. Trim and decorate. Make a hole in centre. Bake in moderate oven 30-40 minutes.

### SHORTBREAD.

Ingredients.—Quantity of ingredients as for potato short paste, and 1 oz. of sugar.

Method.—Knead sugar in along with flour. Roll out  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. Cut into biscuits or fingers and bake in a moderate oven.

### POTATOES AND CHEESE. (Supper Dish).

Ingredients.—1 lb. potatoes, 2 oz. cheese, few slices of onion,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint water, pepper and salt.

Method.—Pare potatoes and cut in slices  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. Grate or chop cheese. Place slices (thin) of onion in bottom of casserole or pie-dish. Add potatoes and cheese in alternate layers, having cheese on top. Add water, cover pie-dish and bake in oven  $\frac{3}{4}$  hrs. Five minutes before ready, remove cover and allow cheese to brown. Serve hot.

### POTATO SHORT PASTE.

Ingredients.— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. cooked potatoes, 2-3 oz. fat, 3 oz. flour, 2 oz. ground rice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teasp. baking powder, pinch salt.

Method.—Place potatoes and fat in a basin, and beat till white and creamy. Add ground rice. Place flour on a board with baking powder and pinch of salt. Turn out mixture in basin and work the two together. If necessary add a little moisture.

Extract from the Mearns Leader newspaper April 1918

## In the Deeside Woods.

### SCHOOLBOYS AS FORESTERS.

#### LIVING IN CAMP.

The "Aberdeen Journal" last week contained an interesting account of the work of schoolboys from various districts in Scotland in the Deeside Woods:—

Those chiefly responsible for carrying out the arrangements in this part of Scotland have been Dr Borthwick, Advisory Forestry Officer for Scotland; Mr John T. Smith and Mr W. W. Smith, of the Timber Supply Department of the Board of Trade, Edinburgh; and Mr Stanley Nairne, who has for a number of years been responsible for the work of organising summer holiday camps in connection with the United Free Church of Scotland and the Young Men's Christian Association. Valuable assistance has also been given by Mr Donald Munro (of Messrs A. and G. Paterson, Ltd., wood merchants, Banchory and Aberdeen), member of the Advisory Committee of that Board, and President of the timber, member of the Scottish Advisory Committee of the Board, and President of the North of Scotland Timber Merchants' Association. It may be mentioned in passing that while there is a good deal of schoolboy labour in the woods at Raemoir, Balfour, Wreaton, west of Aboyne, Cullerlie, the Bellwood, on the estate of Lord Huntly's trustees, and at Major Davidson's estate of Dess, there is also much work in cutting a heavier class of timber from the magnificent woods of Ballogie, Inchmarlo, Birsemohr, Glentanar, and others; the operations, however, being confined to a desirable thinning. Practically in no case has there been what is known in the timber trade as "a clean cut."

Extract from the Stonehaven Journal newspaper August 1917

ABERDEEN SCOTTISH OFFICE, WHITEHALL, S.W. 1.  
30th July, 1918.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary for Scotland to say that he is informed that the Deputy Director of Labour Supply, Scottish Region Headquarters, Ministry of National Service is addressing a letter to local authorities requesting them if practicable to release temporarily men in their employment who have had experience in agriculture or similar work in order that they may assist in getting in the harvest. At the present time it is unnecessary to emphasize the importance of securing as much outside assistance as can possibly be given for this purpose and the Secretary for Scotland trusts that every effort will be made to meet the request of the Deputy Director of Labour Supply.

Extract of a letter from the Scottish Office to the Aberdeen County Clerk about finding workers for bringing in the harvest in 1918

## Discussion notes about document extracts

In what ways do you think the War affected farming ? Why ?

Why do you think fishing was 'stopped in the middle of the harvest' ? How did this affect towns like Rosehearty ?

## Discussion notes about document extracts

Why do you think the newspaper is publishing these recipes ? What do the ingredients tell you about food supplies in 1918 ?

Why were children working in farming and forestry ? How do you think this changed their view of the War, and their role in society ?

## Document bundle 1

### Food supplies and production

This document bundle is a collection of newspaper articles, letters and extracts from Council minutes. They relate to the production and supply of food and point to how this changed as a result of the War.

Read through the documents and discuss the following questions. There are sometimes no 'right answers' to these questions; they are opportunities for you to learn more about the topic by hearing each other's observations and points of view. Make notes about your discussion on the sheets provided.

### Research Questions

- Why do you think the War put a strain on food supplies in Aberdeenshire?
- What measures did authorities take to try to make sure there was enough food ?  
Do you think these measures would be effective?
- Why do you think foods were rationed in the quantities described ?  
What would have been the effect of rationing on people's lives?
- In what ways do you think farming might have been changed by the problems the War created?
- If you had been a farmer in Aberdeenshire at the time how would you have tried to address the problems?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 1

Why do you think the War put a strain on food supplies in Aberdeenshire ?

What measures did authorities take to try to make sure there was enough food ? Do you think these measures would be effective ?

Why do you think foods were rationed in the quantities described ? What would have been the effect of rationing on people's lives ?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 1

In what ways do you think farming was changed by the problems the War created?

If you had been a farmer in Aberdeenshire at the time how would you have tried to address the problems?

## Document bundle 2

### Relieving Poverty and finding work

At the start of the War severe fishing restrictions were introduced along the entire East Coast immediately affecting all those who earned their livelihood from the fishing industry. Agriculture was also affected because farming was very labour-intensive and many young men went away to fight.

This document bundle contains letters, articles, photographs and extracts of official minutes related to the problem of finding alternative work in communities that had lost vital industries, and of the many people who found themselves in poverty because of the War.

Read through the documents and discuss the following questions. There are sometimes no 'right answers' to these questions; they are opportunities for you to learn more about the topic by hearing each other's observations and points of view. Make notes about your discussion on the sheets provided.

### Research Questions

- How do you think the wartime fishing restrictions affected the communities on the North East coast ?
- Christian Watt Marshall says the fishing restrictions meant the 'end of a golden age' What do you think would have been the wider and longer-term effects of the restrictions ?
- What were some of the suggestions from committees and individuals for finding alternative work for people in the fishing communities? What merits and problems do you see with these ideas ?
- Why was Trooper Urquhart given temporary leave from army service? What do you think might have happened if he wasn't ?
- What do you think were the arguments for and against taking children out of school to do 'essential' work ? Which ones do you agree with ? Why ?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 2

How do you think the wartime fishing restrictions affected the communities on the North East coast ?

Christian Watt Marshall says the fishing restrictions meant the 'end of a golden age' What do you think would have been the wider and longer-term effects of the restrictions ?

What were some of the suggestions from committees and individuals for finding alternative work for people in the fishing communities ?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 2

What merits and problems do you see with these ideas?

Why was Trooper Urquhart given temporary leave from army service? What do you think might have happened if he wasn't?

What do you think were the arguments for and against taking children out of school to do 'essential' work? Which ones do you agree with? Why?

## Document bundle 3

### **A land fit for heroes**

Men returning to Scotland after the First World War often hoped to go back to the life they had had before, but the country was changed by four years of turmoil. Poverty, illness and poor nutrition affected many people at home, and returning servicemen often had physical or psychological injuries to cope with. The cost of the War meant that many jobs no longer existed, and servicemen often struggled to find work.

There was no welfare state. Instead a system of 'Poor Relief' was administered by local committees, which considered every case separately to decide whether the applicant was 'deserving' of financial assistance. James Mair, a disabled ex-serviceman became Inspector of the Poor in Longside Parish after the War.

This document bundle contains material related to the experience of returning from the War, the provisions that authorities and Government tried to make, the ways that Aberdeenshire had changed, and about James Mair's work.

Read through the documents and discuss the following questions. There are sometimes no 'right answers' to these questions; they are opportunities for you to learn more about the topic by hearing each other's observations and points of view. Make notes about your discussion on the sheets provided.

### **Research Questions**

- What problems did the authorities anticipate ex-servicemen having when the War finished? How did they plan to address these problems?
- What was the job of the Inspector of the Poor? How do you think the Inspector was regarded by the community in general, and by those in need of financial assistance?
- Why do you think there were plans to build more houses when so many people had died in the War?
- Why do you think many men were unable to return to their old lives? How would this have affected local communities?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 3

What problems did the authorities anticipate ex-servicemen having when the War finished?  
How did they plan to address these problems?

What was the job of the Inspector of the Poor? How do you think the Inspector was regarded by the community in general, and by those in need of financial assistance?

## Discussion notes about Bundle 3

Why do think there were plans to build more houses when so many people had died in the War?

Why do you think many men were unable to return to their old lives ? How would this have affected local communities ?

## Planning further research

### Choose an area of the topic that interests your group

There are four aspects of the topic explored through the document bundles. These are:

1. The strain on food production and supply created by the War. The efforts of the authorities to manage the shortage of food through rationing and extra production, and the resulting rise in prices that meant many people's diet was much poorer by the end of the War.
2. The loss of thousands of young men to War service and the impact on the world of work, especially agriculture and small businesses. The impact of the fishing restrictions on North East fishing villages as well as all those in the fishing industry.
3. The Poor Relief system for assisting those in extreme poverty, and how the War began to change attitudes towards the poor. The work of James Mair, a disabled returned serviceman who became Inspector of the Poor in Longside Parish.
4. The struggle of returned servicemen to find work and to re-settle in a country changed by the War. The attempts by the authorities to provide housing and jobs for these servicemen.

Discuss in your group and with your teacher which one of these aspects you will research further. Your research is intended to deepen your understanding of people's wartime experience in Aberdeenshire.

For example you may wish to learn more about James Mair and his work as Inspector of the Poor after the War. This would involve getting more biographical information about him, understanding the reality of poverty at the time and how the Poor Relief system worked, and investigating some of the individuals and families he helped.

## Planning further research

You may wish to learn more about the women who lost their livelihoods when the fishing restrictions were introduced, and what happened to them when they travelled to find work such as munitions manufacture or in food factories such as Maconochies. What happened to them when the War finished and returned servicemen wanted the jobs?

Your further research is an opportunity to investigate the stories of individuals through the original records that describe their experiences.

### Presenting your research

Consider what sort of presentation your group will create to present its findings. You don't have to make a final decision about the presentation now as you may change your mind once you have researched more material, but make a provisional choice now so you have something to work towards.

### Devise research questions

Devise **at least three questions** about the topic that you will seek to answer in your research and presentation. The questions are intended to deepen your understanding of the local Aberdeenshire wartime experience of food shortages, poverty, changing work patterns and the changed country that emerged from the War.

These should be open questions that aim to explore the topic further rather than closed questions with simple answers. These questions will give you a focus for your work and ensure your research is relevant to your presentation.

### Closed questions

Closed questions often have a short, definite answer such as "Why were there fishing restrictions?" or "Who qualified for Poor Relief?" These types of questions are useful for obtaining specific information but have limited value when you are trying to deepen your understanding of a subject.

### Open questions

Open questions have a wider range of possible answers and so are useful for researching a subject that requires deeper understanding. Examples might be "How did communities and individuals respond to the fishing restrictions?" or "What was the effect of rationing on families and businesses in our local area?"

Spend some time writing a wide range of questions that you think will be useful, then discuss and edit them down until you have three or more that you think will direct your research in the direction you wish it to go.

## Planning further research

### **Collecting research material**

There is a wide range of material available for you to use in researching your topic. In addition, you can consult local agencies and local historical research groups for specific original records and local stories.

### **Libraries**

A stranger on the bars, Christian Watt Marshall.

Contemporary newspapers.

Mairs tales, Christine Macintosh.

Farm life in North East Scotland 1840 - 1914, Ian Carter

### **Archives**

Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine County Council Minutes

Aberdeen County Clerk Letters

Town Council Minutes for many towns in Aberdeenshire inc. Stonehaven, Inverurie, Fraserburgh etc

Stonehaven Town Clerk Letters

School Log Books for many schools in Aberdeenshire

Parish Council records relating to poor relief (NB access to these is by arrangement and discussion with the Archivist)

### **Registrars**

Birth and Death records of individuals who were involved with the Poor Relief system, returned servicemen, women in fishing and other jobs

### **Local history societies**

Stories of local events and individuals expertise in researching local history from different sources

### **Researching your questions**

The emphasis of the Hard Vrocht Grun project is on the Aberdeenshire experience of the War, understood as much as possible through the evidence of original sources.

What information do you need to begin answering your research questions ? What original sources might supply you with that information ?

Who can you ask for assistance in finding the information and understanding it ?

## Planning further research

Use the document bundles as your starting point in deciding what types of information your group requires to undertake the research.

Much original source material has been digitised and is available online or can be sent to you by e-mail. Aberdeenshire Library resources such as books and local newspapers can all be obtained through your local library, for example. Read through the descriptors from different agencies to see what they can supply and how you can request the information.

There can be a short delay between requesting information from agencies and receiving it. Plan your work so you have books, web resources and other materials to be working on while you wait for requested information to arrive.

### **Working as a group**

All the members of your group should have a role in researching your Work, Food and Poverty topic, and in creating and sharing the presentation.

You may decide to divide the work into different tasks such as requesting information from different sources, making notes on specific materials, reading and selecting relevant quotes from books or papers, searching newspapers etc, or you may share the work between you to gain experience of each task.

**Decide on how you will work together as a group before you start to undertake the research. Ensure that each group member is clear about the work they will do for the project.**

This may not happen straight away. Experimenting with ideas, trying things out and exploring a wide range of options before narrowing down are all essential for a successful outcome. If you try something out and it doesn't seem to work, try something else.

## Presenting your research

The purpose of your presentation is to help your audience understand an aspect of Work, Food and Poverty during World War One. As part of your presentation you should introduce the different points of view that existed at the time, and either debate them or present one side in a way that seeks to persuade your audience.

There are several different ways you can create the presentation of your research. Some are suggested here, or you may have a different idea. You should discuss with each other and with your teacher what might be suitable for your group's work, and what time and resources are available with which to create it.

### **Here are some options to consider:**

#### **Physical reporting** such as

- a wall exhibition or collage of images and words,
- a replica wartime 'discovery' box filled with materials displaying your sources and conclusions

#### **Screen-based reporting** such as

- an interactive website including text, images, sounds and spoken words, or short video clips spoken to camera
- powerpoint slideshow of images and words, perhaps to support a live talk from members of the group

#### **Performance reporting** such as

- a sound recording of personal accounts;
- a guided walk through an exhibition of images;
- a short scripted performance using words, music, objects, actions and characters;
- a talk presented by all members of the group together.

## Expressive arts project

In addition to presenting your research into Work, Food and Poverty you have the opportunity to work with an Arts professional to create a performance or art work that explores your research in a different way.

Work, Food and Poverty are universal themes in history. The first responsibility of a government is to ensure its people are safe and fed, and in the First World War this responsibility became divided and strained by the needs of hundreds of thousands of soldiers on active duty overseas. The country continued to need people to run its essential services and preserve the life those soldiers were fighting for.

'Work of national importance' took priority over other work, requiring people to travel and make sacrifices. After the War men returned to find a country weakened and altered, ill-equipped to receive them back and provide them with work, housing and security.

The topic lends itself to the exploration of individuals' stories through exhibitions of artwork, photographs and text, for example. Dramatic presentation of incidents in a family's life could be a powerful way to show the changes that happened through the war, for example when a man leaves for service and later returns with injury.

***Discuss with your teacher what options are available for you to develop your research as an Expressive Arts project.***

## Teacher's Notes

The topic pack is ideally undertaken by students working together in collaborative groups of up to six.

### **Document Extracts activity**

Extracts of documents are provided, alongside questions for student groups to discuss. This introductory activity is intended to prepare the groups for the more in- depth Document Bundle activities. It might usefully be undertaken by the whole class with the teacher as facilitator, as described in the Facilitating Discussion section below.

### **Document Bundle activity**

There are three document bundles containing a mixture of original sources related to a common theme. Students are required to read the materials, discuss their contents using the research questions and make notes of their answers. Note sheets are provided and are best enlarged to A3 size to provide sufficient space for notes.

The research questions are intended to provoke open-ended discussion, and initial class dialogue about discussion techniques may be valuable. Teachers should determine an appropriate time period for groups to undertake each document bundle activity depending on the ability and disposition of the class. The bundles can be duplicated so that up to six groups can be undertaking the task at the same time.

A single document bundle activity might be undertaken by a whole class at the same time if sufficient copies can be made available. This is valuable where teacher facilitation is desirable for the best outcome. Teachers may wish to do this for one document bundle in order to model good practice before setting the groups to work on the other two.

Some guidance may be required for students to access the arcane language of some newspaper reports, official letters and reports. There is also guidance in the "Task overview" section (Page 4) about possible issues with handwritten documents.

A class plenary session may be useful once each group has worked on all three document bundles. On completion of the document bundle activity each group should be in a position to identify an area of further research.

# Teacher's Notes

## Facilitating discussion

Many students will require some structured facilitation and modelling of the discussion process for it to have value in originating good-quality research questions.

It can be valuable to agree 'ground rules' for group discussions, even where students are already experienced in discussion and debate.

For example:

- The goal of the group's discussion is not to reach agreement but to gain a deeper understanding
- Listen with respect and curiosity to others when they are speaking
- All views and ideas are worth consideration
- All members of the group have a chance to speak and be heard
- The discussion is a place to test out ideas, even if they are not fully formed
- There are not necessarily 'right' answers to the questions being asked
- Disagreement should be honest, respectful and seen as an opportunity to explore different ideas
- Listen and check you understand before responding
- Question and challenge ideas, not individuals
- Make notes

Teachers should consider facilitating a group discussion or a class discussion to model good practice for the whole class of students before embarking on separate group discussions.

Facilitation involves asking relevant questions, ensuring the group stays on the subject and follows the ground rules, and redirecting the group back to the subject if the discussion wanders away. The teacher as facilitator should avoid contributing to the discussion itself, but act as a guide to a constructive discussion process.

Successful group discussion is a curricular goal in itself and worth taking the time to ensure students have learned how to do it.

## Teacher's Notes

### **Further research questions**

Groups are asked to devise a minimum of three open questions about the topic to focus their research. These questions should direct research towards local sources with the intention of deepening understanding of the local experience of how work, food and poverty changed in the war years. Students should be encouraged to draft multiple questions and variations on questions, then edit them down through discussion and re-wording.

Teacher guidance is important to ensure relevance. Cross-referencing with other groups may also be useful. Students should see this exercise of devising the questions as a valuable learning activity in its own right.

At this stage it is useful for students to have considered how they might present their research findings. A list of possibilities is included in the topic notes, and teachers may present further or a different set of options depending on resources available in the school, anticipated timetables and the students' own experiences and abilities.

Students should be encouraged to see this as a provisional choice that can be changed later in the light of the research they undertake. Some students may prefer to have the certainty of a form of presentation already decided if this will assist in focussing the research.

### **Further research using original sources**

The emphasis of the Hard Vrocht Grun project is on the Aberdeenshire experience of the War, understood as much as possible through the evidence of original sources.

Students are encouraged to obtain original source materials from a variety of agencies, groups and individuals. The Aberdeenshire Council's Archives, Registrars, Libraries and Museums services are part of the project and are prepared for student requests for material. Named contacts with e-mail addresses and phone numbers are listed at the back of this topic pack, together with descriptors of the types of relevant material available from each.

Local community history societies are part of the project and are available to supply students with locally researched material, copies of original records and expertise in understanding how to interpret original sources. Some have collections of photographs, others documents and objects, researched pamphlets and papers about specific individuals, families, buildings, organisations, community groups etc.

## Teacher's Notes

Students should spend time deciding what specific materials they wish to request from different agencies before contacting them. There may be short delays between requesting information from agencies and receiving it, either electronically or by post, so students should ensure they have library and web-based resources available to be researching while they wait for records to be sent from agencies.

As much as possible, Aberdeenshire agencies have material already prepared for Hard Vrocht Grun project requests and the turnaround should be rapid.

### **Group working**

In the topic notes students are instructed to plan how they will work as a group. Teacher input and support is discretionary in this process depending on students' past experience of cooperative group working and the teacher's knowledge of personalities in the class.

Students should be clear that group working is itself a learning process and an important aspect of the topic work. Discussion, speculation, and the exercise of ideas is integral to the success of their research and presentation. Making mistakes and trying something else is also essential for developing an effective group.

The unit notes encourage students to experiment with ideas and try different ways of working together in order to develop an effective modus operandi for their group.

### **Presenting research**

Teacher guidance on timescales and available resources is important for students to make realistic choices about their research presentation. Sufficient time plus a little extra should be available for students to collate and prepare their research material in a form suitable for presentation, and 'rehearsal time' used effectively.

While ideas are listed in the topic unit the range of options will depend on school resources, and could well be wider than the range presented in the unit.

## Experiences and Outcomes for Hard Vrocht Grun topic packs

Outcome statement	Curriculum area	Group(s) used in
I have used the skills I have developed in the expressive arts to contribute to a public presentation/performance. EXA 3-01a	Expressive Arts > Participation in performances and presentations	
I can use and combine the visual elements and concepts to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings in expressive and design work. EXA 3-03a	Expressive Arts > Art and design	
I can use the visual elements and concepts with sensitivity to express qualities and relationships and convey information, thoughts and feelings. I can use my skills and creativity to generate original ideas in my expressive and design work. EXA 4-03a	Expressive Arts > Art and design	
When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion. I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking. LIT 3-02a * Responsibility of all	Literacy > Listening and talking > Tools for listening and talking	
When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate detailed information, ideas or opinions</li> <li>• explain processes, concepts or ideas with some relevant supporting detail</li> <li>• sum up ideas, issues, findings or conclusions.</li> </ul> LIT 4-09a Responsibility of all *	Literacy > Listening and talking > Creating texts	

<p>I can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view. SOC 3-01a</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>I can make links between my current and previous studies, and show my understanding of how people and events have contributed to the development of the Scottish nation. SOC 3-02a</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>I can describe the factors contributing to a major social, political or economic change in the past and can assess the impact on people's lives. SOC 3-05a</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. SOC 3-06a</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>I can evaluate conflicting sources of evidence to sustain a line of argument. SOC 4-01a</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>I can express an informed view about the changing nature of conflict over time, appreciate its impact and empathise with the experiences of those involved. SOC 4-06b</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People, past events and societies</p>	
<p>Through discussion, I have identified aspects of a social issue to investigate and by gathering information I can assess its impact and the attitudes of the people affected. SOC 4-16b</p>	<p>Social studies &gt; People in society, economy and business</p>	

## External sources of information and assistance

### **Getting professional assistance with your research**

When your group is ready to undertake research using your research questions there are several sources of valuable information, original source material and expert assistance you can use.

Your Teachers and School Area Librarians can provide school-based resources and guidance as to organising your research. They can also advise you about how to use external agencies.

For example the Registrars Office can search for birth, death and marriage records for individuals you wish to investigate further. The Libraries service can find extracts from local newspapers from the time, most of which are digitised and available locally.

Local History societies are a valuable source of local knowledge, original documents and objects, and expertise in research methods.

*Look through the descriptions of the different agencies and discuss with your teacher how each can help you further your research.*

### **Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives**

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives provides a joint Archive service for Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council and access to collections relating mostly to local administration in North East Scotland along with some collections from external depositors, such as businesses.

The main Aberdeenshire resources relating to the First World War period include County Council records, Town Council records, school records and poor relief records.

Once you have developed your research questions after completing the first part of your research project you can contact us at our Old Aberdeen House address below to discuss what sources we may have to help you. You can also find more information about our collections on our website and our online catalogue, and links to these are provided below along with our contact details.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives

Old Aberdeen House

Dunbar Street

Aberdeen AB24 3UJ

T. 01224 481775

E. [archives@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:archives@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

W. [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archives](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archives)

Catalogue. [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archivecatalogue](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archivecatalogue)

## External sources of information and assistance

### **Aberdeenshire Libraries**

The Aberdeenshire Library Service also holds a number of published books which include WW1 poetry and deal with WW1 combatants and casualties in various localities and for different organisations (e.g. University of Aberdeen, Gordon Highlanders). We also hold digitised newspapers from the period, which are a rich resource for your project.

Our contact details are :

Aberdeenshire Libraries, Local Studies Department,

Meldrum Meg Way, Oldmeldrum AB51 0GN.

T: 01651 871219/871220.

E: [local.studies@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.studies@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

The Department is open Monday - Friday, 9.00 - 5.00 and visitors are welcome by appointment.

The principal resource relevant to your project is digitised newspapers; the Aberdeen Journal, the Aberdeen Free Press, the People's Journal and the Evening Express, which all cover the conduct of the war in some detail and the home front in Aberdeenshire.

A number of local newspapers also contain general war news and cover their local area in more detail:

- the Banffshire Journal for Banffshire
- the Buchan Observer for Peterhead
- the Fraserburgh Advertiser
- the Fraserburgh Herald for Fraserburgh,
- the Huntly Express for the Huntly area,
- the Kincardineshire Observer, the Mearns Leader and the Stonehaven Journal (to 1917 only) for the Stonehaven area.

Contact us for assistance in searching the newspapers and finding published books relevant to your project research.

For information and updates please go to our website:

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries/index.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries/index.asp)

## External sources of information and assistance

### **Aberdeenshire Registrars**

Aberdeenshire Registration Service comprises of staff located at offices throughout Aberdeenshire. These offices are geographically spread across all 6 administrative area of Aberdeenshire.

Staff have a wealth of experience and are fully trained in providing guidance and assistance in respect of all Registration matters, including births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships and family history and genealogy services.

If you or your school wishes to access records via the Registration Service, please contact [registrars@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:registrars@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

### **Aberdeenshire Museums Service**

Aberdeenshire Museums Service is the museums section of Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning & Leisure Service. We operate 4 museums across Aberdeenshire including the Mintlaw Discovery Centre, and work in partnership with others, from Fordyce in the north to Stonehaven in the south.

The collections are wide-ranging, including weaponry, archival material and other items from the Western Front in the First World War, and letters from the Egyptian and Mesopotamian campaigns.

Enquiries about the collections and advice on using them for further research as part of a Hard Vrocht Grun research project can be directed to:

Aberdeenshire Museums Service Headquarters and Discovery Centre

Mintlaw Industrial Estate

Station Road

Mintlaw AB42 5EE

T. 01771 622807

E. [museums@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:museums@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## External sources of information and assistance

### **North East Folklore Archive**

An internet resource for the study of the cultural heritage and traditions of North East Scotland. The site contains specific materials related to the Hard Vrocht Grun project as well as a wide range of materials about life in the North East.

[www.nefa.net](http://www.nefa.net)

### **David Atherton, Arts Education Officer**

David is one of the coordinators of the Hard Vrocht Grun project. He is a point of contact for you in finding the best local sources of information and local partner organisations.

[david.atherton@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:david.atherton@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

### **Community History and Heritage Groups**

Aberdeenshire has many local history and heritage groups which research the local area, publish leaflets and booklets, collect original source materials and stories from local history. These groups are an invaluable source of information for your project. There are several ways to access local heritage groups in your area:

- Your teacher or school librarian will know which local groups would be the best for you to contact about your project.
- The Aberdeenshire Council website has a list of Community groups which you can search by subject and by area. [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/clubs/index](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/clubs/index)

### **University of Aberdeen Special Collections Centre**

The Special Collections Centre is home to the University of Aberdeen's historic collections of books, manuscripts, archives and photographs.

The University holds several collections related to WWI. Foremost is the Roll of Honour, a list of all staff, students and alumni of the University who served in WWI, with biographies and photographs of those who were killed in the war. This commemorative book is now digitised and available online at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/roll-of-honour/>

The archive collections contain a number of WWI-related collections, highlights of which include the letters of Amelia Nyasa Laws, a nurse, physiotherapist and masseuse who rehabilitated soldiers wounded on the front and the journals of Sir Alexander Ogston spanning 1915-1917, which record his experiences as a surgeon in hospitals in Serbia and Italy. There is also an oral history collection with interviews recollecting the impact of the war on life at the University.

To use any of the collections for your research, contact the Learning and Outreach team at

email: [scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk)

[scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk).

There is also a WWI factsheet available to help you get started which you can download at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/>

## **Special Collections Centre**

The Sir Duncan Rice Library University of Aberdeen Bedford Road Aberdeen AB25 2WN

Tel: (01224) 272598E:

email: [scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk)

[scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:scc.learning@abdn.ac.uk) (school enquiries)

email: [speclib@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:speclib@abdn.ac.uk)

[speclib@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:speclib@abdn.ac.uk) (general public enquiries)

Web: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/>

# Hard Vrocht Grun Project

**Aberdeenshire**   
COUNCIL



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

