

# Researching and Sharing your Hidden History

A guide for schools and community groups

## What is a Hidden History, and why are they important?



Think of a famous person from history-who would that be? Winston Churchill? Florence Nightingale? Maybe Queen Victoria? These are well known names - people who played an important role in shaping the past. At the same time, you don't have to be important to make a difference. We are all making history every day, we all have a story, a point of view, something to say. **"Wales for Peace"** is a Heritage Lottery Fund project (part of The National Lottery Fund) which is asking one big question:

**"In the one hundred years since the First World War how has Wales contributed to peace"**

To answer this question, we think we need to look not only at the stories of 'important people', but also at 'hidden histories' - stories as yet untold - including the extraordinary experiences of everyday people who found themselves to be in the right time and place to make a difference.

## What Kind of Stories are we looking for?

1

### SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Past and present soldiers stories and testimonies

2

### REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Refugees arriving recently or people who arrived as refugees a long time ago

3

### PEACE MAKERS

People who have made a personal stand for peace, sometimes at considerable cost to themselves

4

### OTHER PEACE MAKERS

People who have worked and are working for understanding and harmony between different groups - in their local community, nationally or internationally

However, your story could be about anyone from Wales who has in some way opposed or been affected by war in the last hundred years. It could be the story of a soldier's name on a memorial, the story of refugees fleeing to Wales from danger, women who took part in the peace camp at Greenham Common, someone who campaigned against apartheid or who is working for peace in Wales and the world right now. Your story could have happened in 1914, or at 19:14 last night.

**This guide** will give you everything you need to uncover and tell your story. It will help you to decide how you would like to present your hidden history, how much you would like to be involved, and how much support you need. Please use it and give us any comments!

## Creating a “Hidden History” – where to start?

The first thing you need is a **definite idea**. Whose story would you like to tell? Some examples are already available on our website at <https://wciavoices.wordpress.com/>

If you do have someone in mind, but don't know where to start, it might be helpful to watch an episode of the BBC programme “Who do you Think You Are”, where celebrities find out more about their family history. Note where they go to find out information, what sort of documents they use, and who they get to help them. You can see an episode here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007t575/episodes/guide>

Your hidden history may be about a family member, or someone in your community whose story you feel is valuable. You might like the idea of telling the stories of others who lived lives similar to your own, and were affected by conflict.

**You decide! Talk to your friends and share ideas!** If you are stuck, look at the suggestions on **Top Tips Sheet 1** at the end of this resource.

## Conducting your research

Now that you have your idea, how will you find out information? Some ideas for places to go are listed below.

- **Your local Archives and Registry office.** They hold information such as birth certificates, marriage certificates and death certificates - also census information, local newspapers or photographs. Perhaps you could organise a visit?
- **Online.** You can find a lot of information on “People’s Collection Wales”. This is a website dedicated to preserving the everyday histories of Wales. It’s free to join and contribute to and lots of individuals and groups use it to collect and share information and images about their home village, or town, old school, or perhaps a special interest like old Welsh houses. It’s a bit like having lots of little local museums online.

- **Wales Newspapers online** is a great resource if you want to search for newspaper articles on a particular person or event from the early 20th century. It’s available here: <http://newspapers.library.wales/>

- If you particularly want to research a conscientious objector (CO) from WWI, you can use the **Pearce Register of Conscientious Objectors**. The register is the work of Cyril Pearce, a retired senior lecturer based at the

University of Leeds. It’s a database containing thousands of entries detailing what is known about WWI Conscientious Objectors across the UK. You can access information about Welsh COs by simply going to the [Wales Peace Map](http://www.walesforpeace.org/wfp/pearceregister) : <http://www.walesforpeace.org/wfp/pearceregister> and ticking the Pearce Register box.



## What if I want to find out information from someone who is still alive?

You may wish **to interview** someone who has been involved in more recent events, or even someone who is an inspiration in your local community today! Although you may still want to do some background research (e.g. in archives or newspapers), it's great if you can interview people in person! What about getting in touch with them and asking their permission?

### Some things to think about beforehand:

- How will you record the interview (audio? video?) Make sure you have permission, and that your interviewee is comfortable with this!
- What device will you use? e.g. smartphone, i-pad, mic, video camera.....
- What questions will you ask? You might like to develop a list of questions - if possible open ended questions which help you get more information, rather than closed which will lead to a "Yes", or "No" answer. Have a look at the **"Top Tips Sheet 2: Conducting Interviews"** at the end of this guide for more detailed guidance.

Please make sure that you have your interviewee's permission to use information about them. Always be sensitive about how what you write may affect them, and check it with them before anything is published.



## How do I put my story together?

Your story doesn't have to be very long, but you should include:

- When and where the person was born
- Where they lived, or where they were sent to in terms of the story you are telling
- What they did and how it affected them and people around them
- How do you think they felt - and others around them?
- Where and when (and how) they died
- Is this story important for us today? If so, why?

**Their actions are, of course the main focus for your story.** Did the person you are writing about put themselves before others? In small every day ways, or in a grand or brave gesture? Did they achieve something useful, or extraordinary? Perhaps their actions had far-reaching effects, far beyond their intentions-like Oskar Schindler for example? Did they see things differently to most people - like a conscientious objector for example? If you research these questions, you will have their story. You can also imagine what it was like for them and others, and include your own thoughts and feelings about what they did and why.

Now have a go at writing your findings up. It doesn't have to be long - a paragraph with a photo/map or letter excerpt is very worthwhile. Take a look of the account of George Elwyn Davies, a soldier whose name appears on the Narberth war memorial as an example:



Remember we are looking for the untold stories of everyday people, uncovered by people living in Wales today.

Your story doesn't need to read like a newspaper or magazine article. Use your imagination to think what that person must have felt like, and ask questions about why they did what they did, how others reacted to them, and the results of their actions.



**Yr hanesion y tu ôl i'r enwau...**  
**George Elwyn Davies**  
Ganwyd George Elwyn Davies yn Nhrefemi, Arberth y 1895.  
Gadawodd Ysgol y Sir Arberth pan oedd yn 15 oed. Agprodd siop gigydd, gan ddod y siopwr leuengaf yn y dref.  
Weddi stomi na allodd ymuno â'r llynges, ymestrodd yn hytrach gyda Ffwlilwyr Sir Gaerllirfyn, un o lawer o ddynion Arberth yn y gatrawd honno. Gyrwyd i Ffrainc gyda Byddin Ymgyrchol Prydain.  
Dioddefodd galedi mawr ym Mrwydr Poelcappelle. Erbyn mis Tachwedd 1917 roedd ei Fataliwn, yr 2il/7fed, yn Ypres a Passchendaele.  
Oddi yma ysgrifennodd ei lythyr olaf adref.  
Bu farw o gwyfau helaeth ar 11eg Tachwedd. Claddwyd ym Mynwent Filwrol Lijsenthoek.

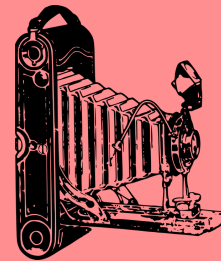
**The stories behind the names...**  
**George Elwyn Davies**  
George Elwyn Davies was born in Templeton, Narberth in 1895.  
He left Narberth County School when he was 15 and opened a butcher's shop, becoming the youngest shopkeeper in the town.  
Disappointed not to have been able to join the navy, he enlisted instead in the Lancashire Fusiliers, one of many Narberth men in that regiment. He was sent to France with the British Expeditionary Force.  
He endured great hardship at the Battle of Poelcappelle and by November 1917 his Battalion, the 2nd/7th, was at Ypres and Passchendaele. It was from here that he wrote his last letter home.  
He died of extensive wounds on fifth November and was buried at Lijsenthoek Military Cemetery.

**CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE UNCOVERED A HIDDEN HISTORY! NOW YOU CAN DECIDE HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS.**

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BRING YOUR STORY TO LIFE IN SOME OTHER WAY?

A good piece of writing - an article, blog or poem - can be really powerful. You may, however, want to share your story in another way. Why not get creative? You could share your story as:

- an audio interview
- a video
- an animation.



Talk others in your class/ community group, and decide what medium is best, what equipment you will need, and how you are going to plan and produce your story.

**Have fun!** Some practical tips to help you are set out in **Top Tips Sheet 3**.

Remember to share whatever you produce with Wales for Peace so we can put it up on our **Peace Map!**

## TOP TIPS SHEET 1 -

### HELP! I DON'T KNOW WHO TO WRITE ABOUT

- Remember that you can write about someone local (with their permission!) Even if they are well-known in your area, they are less likely to be known in other parts of the country, so are still a 'hidden history'.
- Try reading some local history books, does anyone stand out to you as an interesting character to investigate?
- Check out your local cenotaph for names that speak to you.
- Visit your local archive and research some local newspapers. If you don't know where to start, pick a date that is significant to you-a birthday or anniversary, D Day or VE Day and see what jumps out from the pages of the past.
- If you can, spend some time with some older local people in your community and listen to their stories about the past. What speaks to your imagination?
- If you are still short of ideas, contact Wales for Peace for suggestions.



## TOP TIPS SHEET 2 -

### CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- One of the best ways to get the person you are interviewing to relax is not to use the word interview! You can refer to what will become a recorded interview as a talk, a chance to remember, ...
  - Always get them to say who they are and what they have been invited to talk about.
  - Some questions are factual-don't worry about how you phrase things like, "where are you from? How long have you been involved in....."
  - If the person talks quite freely but you want to give them a bit of direction, try prompts such as: "How did that make you feel", "What did you think about ...."etc.
  - Generally, it's better to use open ended questions, rather than closed ones - questions that expect the answer "Yes", or "No".
- Here's some general examples of open ended questions that may also be appropriate to a hidden history:

*What is your favourite memory from childhood?*

*What was your experience of .....?*

*How did it make you feel?*

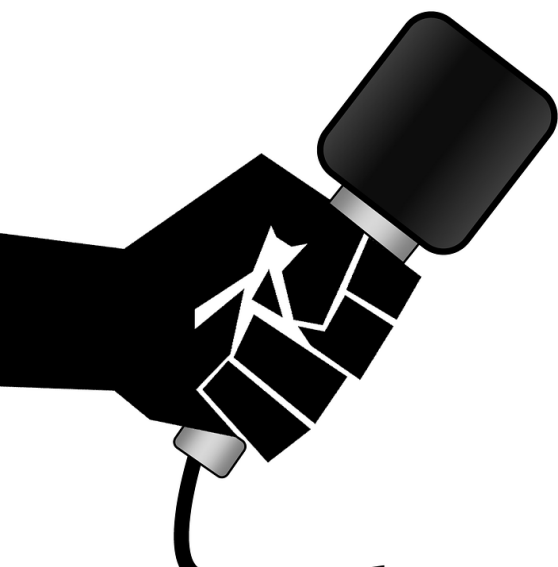
*What were you and your family affected by ...?*

*How did you go about ..... ?*

*How do you feel about what happened now?*

*Why do you think what happened is important for us today?*

- Don't worry about how long someone talks for. Remember that you can edit interviews down afterwards.
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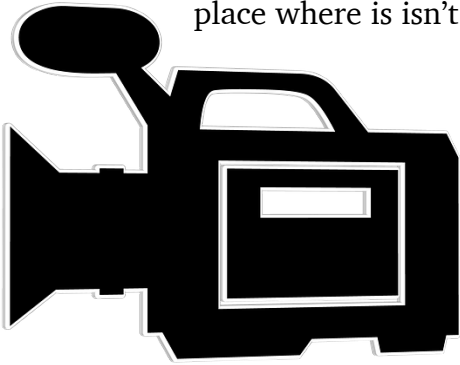


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## TOP TIPS SHEET 3 – MAKING EFFECTIVE AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDINGS

- **Practice first!** If you have smartphone, i-pad or tablet with an audio recording option, have a go at talking into it or at interviewing someone. Don't forget to ask permission though! The audio recording function should be indicated by a little microphone symbol:

- For a **good recording place** your mic close to the person speaking in a nice and quiet place where is isn't windy so that you get as little external interference as possible.



- When **interviewing** someone have your questions ready – ones that will get the information you need!. Remember to speak fairly slowly and clearly, so that people can hear you.

- **For a video:** You should be able to find your video function in your camera function on your phone-it should have an option to switch from still images to moving ones.

- When **filming** someone position the camera, phone or ipad so you get a nice view of the person's head and shoulders, usually at a bit of an angle (like they do on TV where you hear the interviewer asking the questions, but you can't see them). The person you are interviewing might have an opinion on how they look! Filming from slightly higher up is usually better.
- **Practice getting the material off your phone and onto a computer.** It may be that you need to do this via the USB cable (the cable you charge it with), or upload to an App.

# Information for Teachers & Community Leaders:

## 1. Visiting your local Archives:

There is a list of the Archives and Registry offices in Wales at the end of this guide. If your visit involves travel costs, Wales for Peace may be able to reimburse you. Contact us on [walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk](mailto:walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk).

## 2. Using People's Collection Wales:

<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/>

If you would like some support with using this online resource, we could pair you up with a digital volunteer. Please ask!

## 3. Accessing the Pearce Register of Conscientious Objectors:

Information about Welsh COs during WWI can be accessed by going to the Wales Peace Map : <http://www.walesforpeace.org/wfp/pearceregister> and ticking the Pearce Register box.

- A search bar will appear across the bottom of the map and the full list of entries will appear in a table below the search bar (5 entries per page). You can filter/search in the following ways:
- search by name: type a name or part of a name into the box and all the entries containing this name will appear
- filter by county: select any of the counties from the drop down list. These are the Welsh [counties prior to 1994](#)
- search by town: type in any town or village to find the entries from that location - not every entry has this information
- filter by motivation: select any motivation from the list and the results will appear below

Click 'Find out more' on any entry to see all the details from the Pearce Register, from information about tribunals to prison service details. If you would like the help of a digital volunteer with this, please ask!

## 4. Supporting Pupils / Group members to do interviews with people alive today:

Please make sure that individuals or groups being interviewed have given their permission and are comfortable with any technology being used (e.g. phone, i-pad, camera, mic). Any permissions should be formalised in a release form and Wales for Peace can provide these for you.

Also ensure that pupils / group members are prepared for the interview in that they know how to work the equipment and are clear what questions they are going to ask - open-ended ones if possible.

## 5. Getting work published online:

Once your pupils / group members are happy with the story they have produced, with your help and guidance, you can send it to Wales for Peace for publishing. We can have it typed up and loaded onto our website by one of our other volunteers. You can post us your story to:

Wales for Peace, Temple of Peace & Health, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3AP, or email it to: [walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk](mailto:walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk)

## 6. If your hidden history is in another format (e.g. film, audio, animation...)

Please contact us to discuss the best way to share. We may also be able to help you with equipment such as i-pad, recording equipment, etc.

## 7. If you need any technical help, or other advice, please do contact us:

By post: Wales for Peace, Temple of Peace & Health, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3AP

E-mail: [walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk](mailto:walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk)

Tel: 029 2082 1051

## Contact Details for all archive services in Wales.

Please call beforehand for opening hours and check out visiting protocol if the information is not supplied below. They all hold different hours and procedures.

See Archive Wales Website: [https://  
archives.wales/visit-us/find-your-archive/](https://archives.wales/visit-us/find-your-archive/)

**Aberystwyth University Archives**  
Tel: 01970 628593

**Anglesey Archives**  
Telephone: 01248 751930  
**Opening Times**  
Monday: 9.15am - 4.45pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 2pm)  
Tuesday: 9.15am - 4.45pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 2pm)  
Wednesday: 9.15am - 4.45pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 2pm)  
Thursday: Closed  
Friday: Closed

**Bangor University, Archives and Special Collections**  
Phone: 01248 382966  
**Opening Times**  
Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 1.00pm  
2.00pm - 5.00pm

**Carmarthenshire Archive Service**  
Llanelli Library: 01554 744327  
Carmarthen Library: 01267 224824  
Ammanford Library: 01269 598360

**Ceredigion Archives**  
Telephone: 01970 633697 or 633698

**Conwy Archive Service**  
Telephone: 01492 577550  
**Opening Times**  
Monday to Thursday from 10:00 to 12:30 and 13:30 to 16:30

**Denbighshire Archives**  
Telephone: 01824 708250  
**Opening times**

Monday - Closed  
Tuesday - Closed  
Wednesday - 1.30pm - 4.30pm  
Thursday - 9.30am - 4.30pm\*  
Friday - 9.30am - 4.30pm\*  
\*Please note that there is a restricted service between 11.45am and 2pm on Thursdays and Fridays.

**Flintshire Record Office**  
Telephone: 01244 532364  
**Opening Times**  
Monday: 10.00 am - 4.30 pm  
Tuesday: 10.00 am - 4.30 pm  
Wednesday: CLOSED  
Thursday: 10.00 am - 4.30 pm  
Friday: 10.00 am - 4.30 pm

**Glamorgan Archives**  
Telephone 029 2087 2200

**Gwent Archives**  
Telephone: 01495 353363  
**Opening Hours**  
Open Monday to Friday 9:30 - 5:00 p.m  
We are also open on the **2nd Saturday each month** from 10.00am - 4.00pm

**Gwynedd Archives - Caernarfon Record Office**  
Telephone: **01286 679 095**  
**Opening Times:**  
Wednesday: 9.30-12.30, 1.30-7;  
Thursday-Friday: 9.30-12.30, 1.30-5

**Gwynedd Archives-Meirionnydd Record Office**  
Phone: 01341 424682  
**Opening Hours**  
Monday: 09:30 - 12:30; 13:30 - 17:00  
Tuesday: 9.30-12.30, 13.30 - 17.00  
Wednesday: CLOSED  
Thursday: CLOSED  
Friday: CLOSED  
Saturday: CLOSED

**National Library of Wales**  
Phone: 01970 632 800  
**Opening Hours:**  
Monday - Friday: 9:00am - 6:00pm  
Saturday: 9:30am - 5:00pm



**Pembrokeshire Record Office****Telephone:** 01437 775456**Opening Hours****Wednesday:** 10am - 8pm;**Thursday and Friday:** 10am - 5pm;**Saturday:** 10am - 3pm (not Bank Holiday weekends)

No records will be issued between 12.30 to 1.30 and 5.30 to 6.30 Wednesdays and between 12.30 to 1.30 Saturdays.

**Powys Archives****Telephone:** 01597 826 088. Visits by appointment.**Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales****Telephone** 01970 621 200**Special Collections and Archives, Cardiff University****Telephone** 029 2087 4911**Opening hours:**

9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday

**Swansea University, Richard Burton Archives****Telephone:** 01792 295021**Opening Times**

The Archives are open to all. Visits are by appointment. Appointments for Tuesday evening must be made by 13:00 on the previous Friday

**Monday:** 9:15-13:00, 14:00-16:45**Tuesday:** 9:15-13:00, 14:00-16:45, 17:30-19:30 (during term time)**Wednesday:** 9:15-13:00, 14:00-16:45**Thursday:** 9:15-13:00, 14:00-16:45**Friday:** 9:15-13:00, 14:00-16:45**University of Wales Trinity Saint David Archives****Telephone:** 01570 424716**West Glamorgan Archive Service****Telephone:** 01792 636589**Opening Times****Monday:** CLOSED**Tuesday:** 9.00am-7.00pm**Wednesday:** 9.00am-5.00pm**Thursday:** 9.00am-5.00pm**Friday:** 9.00am-5.00pm**West Glamorgan Archive Service - Neath Antiquarian Society Archives****Telephone:** 01639 620139**Opening hours****Monday:** 9.30am-12.30pm, 1.30pm-5.00pm**Tuesday:** 9.30am-12.30pm, 1.30pm-5.00pm**Wrexham Archives and Local Studies****Telephone** 01978 297 480**Opening Times****Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:**

10:00-5:00pm

**Last Saturday in each month** 11:00-4:00pm

Last document request 4.30pm

Documents must be ordered in advance for a Saturday.

Closed Tuesday, Saturday (except for the last Saturday in the month), Sunday, Public Holidays