

Schoolchildren digitise cigarette case that saved WW1 soldier's life

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Pupils at Cheney School digitising material related to the First World War
Credit: Rumble Museum

A cigarette case which saved a man's life at the Battle of Passchendaele was one of the treasures explored by schoolchildren aiming to preserve the stories of the First World War.

Cheney School pupils recorded the stories behind an array of war-related objects brought along by people in the community at the school's Rumble Museum earlier this month.

They were trained by academics who run Oxford University's Lest We Forget project, which aims to collect and digitise artefacts related to the First World War.

Dr Stuart Lee of the Faculty of English Language and Literature trained the pupils aged 12 to 17 in how to record the items, interview visitors and digitize the objects by taking photographs.

The items brought to the collection day included medals, letters, diaries, photographs, guns, masks and helmets. The cigarette case was brought in by Oxford man Chris Dorey, and it prevented a bullet from hitting his grandfather during the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917.

Cheney School sixth former Louis Attlee and his family brought their relative's grave marker. It belonged to Captain Charles Gorrell Barnes who was killed in action in 1918 and the wooden grave marker will now be added a national bank of artefacts due to go live next year as part of the project.

"We were thrilled to assist Cheney School in Headington last Friday when they ran their WW1 Digital Collection Day," said Dr Lee. "As part of Oxford University's ['Lest We Forget'](#) project, which is supporting schools and communities to run such events, it was fantastic that Cheney have led the way.

"Opening their doors in the afternoon to any member of the public who had items to share related to the war over 400 items were digitised for sharing online in the future. The students at the [school](#) interviewed the contributors, and also did all the scanning and digital photography, learning not only IT skills but also key historical research skills along the way.

More information: "It was a wonderful event to kick start our project

and if you are interested in running your own digital collection day in the lead up to November 2018, then please contact us at ww1collections@it.ox.ac.uk."

Provided by University of Oxford

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