‘Then & Now’ – Rebuilding Lives After the Great War

DRAMA/ACTING WORKSHOP No. 4 & 6 – 18 July 2018 – 9.45 – 11.45

26 September 2018 – 9.30 – 11.30

CARLTON JUNIOR SCHOOL – YEAR 5 / 6 (2 X 2 hrs) – 20 PUPILS

LEARNING AREA: WW1 TRENCHES, SOLDIERS RANKS, DRILLS, REAL LIFEE ACCOUNTS (LETTERS), SCRIPT WORK

Warm up

* Zombie Tag – Class find an individual space
  + One person is the Zombie and has to tag another
  + If the Zombie comes towards you, to avoid being tagged, you shout the name of another person in the group and they become the Zombie with the aim of tagging someone.
  + If you get tagged, you become the Zombie
  + Rules – if you are tagged three times, you are out after you have been Zombie for the third time
  + Those who are out form the ‘wall’ to close the size of space down.
* Eyes up / Eyes down. The group have to all start looking down and when the instruction ‘Eyes Up’ is given, everyone has to select someone to eye contact. If they make eye contact, they have to sit down. The instruction is then given ‘Eyes Down’ and all look down again. This continues until there is one or two people left depending on whether it was an odd or even number to start with.

Discussion of what the group already know of trenches, ‘dugouts’, soldiers’ rankings. Read description of a dugout / trench and show pictures.

Exercise in groups of 4 / 5 - demonstrate

* Create a drill with a leader shouting instructions e.g.
  + Company salute
  + Company march four paces forward
  + Company turn to the left
  + Company halt
  + Stand at ease.
* Watch each other’s drill to decide which show discipline and which would not pass inspection

Original Drama script

The following script was used in the first workshop:

Explanation that the letters are real, written to Lucy Sproston and that they were found in a cardboard box on the top of the wardrobe by her daughters.

The script is read through in the group

Explanation of the structure of the scripted piece and its overall focus

* Narration explaining the origin of the letters and the truth of the story the audience are about to see.
* Introduction to the 6 letter writers with the ranks outlined
* The drills are performed and co-ordinated as to which order they are performed in.
* As each of the six soldiers reads out (or it can be memorised) their section from the letters, a small group of 3 / 4 children acts it out (including the letter writer in the scene)
* The final narration completes the story.

Lucy’s Letters

*(Lucy is sitting in the centre of the space and letters are delivered to her one at a time [during the following narration] from six soldiers – Oliver (her friend), Alvin (her brother who was killed on 29 July 1918), Bob (her fiancé who was killed on 12 October 1918), Tom (her cousin), Len (her eventual husband) & Joe (her friend)*

All This is a true story.

Narrator 1 It is 2018, one hundred years after the end of the First World War.

Narrator 2 Lucy was 19 years old at the end of the war.

Narrator 3 When she died in 1978, some letters where found in a cardboard box on top of her wardrobe.

Narrator 4 They were from six men who wrote to her during the First World War.

Narrator 5 We will introduce them to you

*(6 soldiers stand forward]*

Oliver Captain Oliver C H Lampard

Alvin Second Lieutenant Frederick Alvin Sproston

Bob Second Lieutenant Robert Stott

Tom Lieutenant Thomas Cowap

Len Flight Lieutenant Leonard Hall

Joe Sergeant Joseph Higginson

*(There are groups of marching soldiers going through drills being led with instructions from their Captains. Once finished, Lucy speaks)*

Lucy My name is Winifred Lucy Sproston and these are some of my letters: *(She opens one of the envelopes)*

Oliver (Gp1) Dear Lucy. Today I have started being official. I am feeling fagged, for nearly every soldier in the British Army has saluted me at least six times and my arm aches after returning them. When not saluting, I have been supervising sundry squads of conscripts (bless ‘em). I think I’m good at supervising.

*(Oliver’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Alvin (Gp 2) Dear Lucy. When I was down at the base, I saw quite a number of Portuguese soldiers, but I can’t say that I am very much impressed by them. Instead of calling them Portuguese, the soldiers call them Pork and Cheese. We are holding Sports this afternoon. I am unable to compete owing to the fact that I have been made Orderly Corporal for the week. *(A corporal who attends upon an officer to carry orders or messages or a corporal whose turn it is to attend to the domestic affairs of his corps or regiment.)*

*(Alvin’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Bob (Gp 3) Dear Lucy. We are bullied about as if we were dogs by the Sergeant Major and the officers aren’t much better. I’m afraid if I met some of them in civy life, I should forget myself. One does not mind a little bullying but when a fellow who has never been out to the front makes it hot for you, it goes against the grain.

*(Bob’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Tom (Gp 4) Dear Lucy. You may have wondered how I’m getting on – well I’m doing very well now. They sent me over on the 9th. Things shouldn’t be too bad when they have finished me ‘off’. I’ll have some ugly scars and ‘mouse holes’ in my leg – but then I never thought much about looks so I won’t mind. If all the scratches I got were placed end to end, they would measure over four feet and I have already had thirty odd stitches taken out.

*(Tom’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Len (Gp 5) Dear Lucy. At this aerodrome, the new pilots have always learnt on DH6s and then gone on to the FE2b which is used for bombing at night but at present the first section is full up and so they have to put about a dozen of us straight on the FEs which is rather unfortunate as they are such heavy buses (ton & half) and the controls are rather heavy.

*(Len’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Joe (Gp 6) Dear Lucy. We have not done much work of any kind this week. Just a little drill with stretchers and lectures and bandaging. How would you like to bandage up a wounded soldier? That will be part of our work when we get out to the front. Yesterday, we were learning how to ‘collect wounded’ on stretchers under fire. We have to move along in a crouching position and it is no easy matter to carry a patient on a stretcher when in that position.

*(Joe’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Narrator 6 Lucy wrote and received many letters during the war.

Narrator 7 After four years, the war was nearly over

Narrator 8 Then she received the news:

Narrator 9 Alvin, her brother was killed on 29 July 1918

Narrator 10 Three and a half months before the end of the war

Narrator 11 Bob, her fiancé was killed on 12 October 1918

Narrator 12 One month before the end of the war

Narrator 13 Lucy struggled to accept the deaths of her brother and fiancé

Narrator 14 So close to the end of the war

Narrator 15 The trauma affected her for the rest of her life

Tasks

* Give out the narration lines, decide who is going to take each of the six named men & Lucy
* Divide the rest into six groups of 3 / 4 (including the lead soldier – letter writer) to work on creating scenes to illustrate the letters.
* Encourage each group to use dialogue and action equally. Consider the reality for each of the soldiers. Use freeze frames / stillness to highlight moments, structure the action, depict the fighting in a safe way etc.
* Work through staging the piece – ideas
  + Lucy sitting on a chair – upstage centre
  + Groups 1, 3 & 5 standing / sitting on her stage left
  + Groups 2, 4 & 6 standing / sitting on her stage right
  + Narrators stand forward to deliver their lines.
  + Groups move forward to enact their scenes, alternating
* Ending tableau with narrators saying their lines and then moving into a place in the tableau to depict a scene from the front line

Film sections, learn scripts etc for the next workshop.

The script was altered from the first workshop as there were not enough numbers to depict all the six sections of letter so it was decided that the saluting would be done by the whole group and information about each of the letter writers would be spoken by Lucy.

Here is the final script which was developed in the second:

Lucy’s Letters

*(Lucy is sitting in the centre of the space and letters are delivered to her one at a time [during the following narration] from six soldiers – Oliver (her friend), Alvin (her brother who was killed on 29 July 1918), Bob (her fiancé who was killed on 12 October 1918), Tom (her cousin), Len (her eventual husband) & Joe (her friend)*

All This is a true story.

Narrator 1 It is 2018, one hundred years after the end of the First World War.

Narrator 2 Lucy was 19 years old at the end of the war.

Narrator 3 When she died in 1978, some letters where found in a cardboard box on top of her wardrobe.

Narrator 4 They were from six men who wrote to her during the First World War.

Narrator 5 We will introduce them to you

*(6 soldiers stand forward]*

Oliver (Liam) Captain Oliver C H Lampard

Alvin (Reece) Second Lieutenant Frederick Alvin Sproston

Bob (Jordan) Second Lieutenant Robert Stott

Tom (Keenan) Lieutenant Thomas Cowap

Len (Sonny) Flight Lieutenant Leonard Hall

Joe (Sam) Sergeant Joseph Higginson

*(There are groups of marching soldiers going through drills being led with instructions from their Captains. Once finished, Lucy speaks)*

Lucy (Evie) My name is Winifred Lucy Sproston and these are some of my letters: *(She opens one of the envelopes)*

Lucy A letter from my friend, Oliver

Oliver (Liam) Dear Lucy. Today I have started being official. I am feeling fagged, for nearly every soldier in

All the British Army has saluted me at least six times and my arm aches after returning them. When not saluting, I have been supervising sundry squads of conscripts (bless ‘em). I think I’m good at supervising.

*(Oliver’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Lucy A letter from my brother, Alvin

Alvin (Reece) Dear Lucy. When I was down at the base, I saw quite a number of Portuguese

Iman soldiers, but I can’t say that I am very much impressed by them. Instead of

Michael calling them Portuguese, the soldiers call them Pork and Cheese. We are

Lily holding Sports this afternoon. I am unable to compete owing to the fact that I have been made Orderly Corporal for the week. *(A corporal who attends upon*

*an officer to carry orders or messages or a corporal whose turn it is to attend to the domestic affairs of his corps or regiment.)*

*(Alvin’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Lucy A letter from my fiancé, Bob

Bob (Jordan) Dear Lucy. We are bullied about as if we were dogs by the Sergeant Major

Ryan and the officers aren’t much better. I’m afraid if I met some of them in civy

Riley life, I should forget myself. One does not mind a little bullying but when a

Jamie-Lee fellow who has never been out to the front makes it hot for you, it goes against the grain.

*(Bob’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Lucy A letter from my cousin, Tom

Tom (Keenan) Dear Lucy. You may have wondered how I’m getting on – well I’m doing very

Jacob well now. They sent me over on the 9th. Things shouldn’t be too bad when

Nadia they have finished me ‘off’. I’ll have some ugly scars and ‘mouse holes’ in my

Chloe leg – but then I never thought much about looks so I won’t mind. If all the scratches I got were placed end to end, they would measure over four feet and I have already had thirty odd stitches taken out.

*(Tom’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Lucy A letter from my friend, Len

Len (Sonny) Dear Lucy. At this aerodrome the new pilots have always learnt on DH6s and

Liam then gone on to the FE2b which is used for bombing at night but at present

Jayden the first section is full up and so they have to put about a dozen of us straight on the FEs which is rather unfortunate as they are such heavy buses (they are a ton & half) and the controls are rather heavy.

*(Len’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

Lucy A letter from my friend, Joe

Joe (Sam) Dear Lucy. We have not done much work of any kind this week. Just a little

Michelle drill with stretchers and lectures and bandaging. How would you like to

Rory bandage up a wounded soldier? That will be part of our work when we get

Roscoe out to the front. Yesterday, we were learning how to ‘collect wounded’ on stretchers under fire. We have to move along in a crouching position and it is no easy matter to carry a patient on a stretcher when in that position.

*(Joe’s group act out the scene described above after it has been described)*

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Narrator 15 The trauma affected her for the rest of her life

The Teacher is to film the work so that it can be rehearsed and performed for an assembly

Commemorating the centenary of WW1 later in the term.