

SOWING THE POPPY SEED – YEAR TWO OF HELPING SCHOOL PUPILS LEARN ABOUT VETERANS

Veterans' charity Poppyscotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland launched today (14 September) the second phase of a series of internet-based materials to revolutionise the way pupils learn about veterans, remembrance and conflict.

Following the success in 2008 of Sowing the Poppy seed, Poppyscotland is continuing to grow its education project this year. New materials are available for children aged 3 to 8, with an exciting new film for younger children that will take the form of a chat show, with the child presenter interviewing the Poppy. There is also a new poetry competition for pupils in P4-7 and S1-3. Stimulus is photographs by acclaimed war photographer, Robert Wilson, taken in Baghdad, Iraq, and Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Pupils from Hermitage Park Primary and James Gillespie High attended the launch at the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh and met renowned Army poet, Lieutenant Colonel J B Brown, Commanding Officer 7 Royal Logistics Corps. JB has served in many operational tours, including Northern Ireland and Iraq, and was featured in the Sunday Times in 2008 as one of a new generation of 'soldier-poets.'

Poppyscotland Chief Executive Ian McGregor said: "The response from schools across Scotland last year was extremely positive and we are delighted to be expanding on the project this year. It is vital that young people know about conflicts, remembrance and the role of veterans in their communities. The new film, additional materials and the poetry competition will enable pupils to learn in a way that is both creative and engaging."

Sowing the Poppy seed was developed by Poppyscotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland in conjunction with Determined to Succeed, Lady Haig's Poppy Factory and the Royal British Legion Scotland. The materials include new planning documents, challenges, posters, poppy seeds and teachers' notes. In addition, there will be additional archive footage and subtitles for all films, as well as activity guides and research activities to support teachers.

Anne Jardine from Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), who spoke at today's event, said: "The fantastic new materials available through Poppyscotland in conjunction with LTS and Determined to Succeed support the values, principles and practice of Curriculum for Excellence by offering children engaging and motivating learning opportunities linked to the world around them.

"The pupils who attended the launch today will be able to take their new knowledge back to school and share their experience with their fellow pupils from P4 up to S3, further broadening the reach of these innovative learning materials. There will also be opportunities

for them to take responsibility for involving, organising and perhaps mentoring their school in the Poppy Poetry competition.”

Sowing the Poppy seed can be downloaded from www.poppyscotland.org.uk/education

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Poppyscotland supports veterans and their families living in Scotland through direct financial assistance and donating to organisations that deliver specialist services to veterans, such as Combat Stress and Erskine.

To find out more about Poppyscotland, visit www.poppyscotland.org.uk

Poppy Poetry opened on 31st August 2009 and closes on 30th November 2009. The winning class from each category will receive a workshop, hosted by the **Scottish Poetry Library**. Robyn Marsack, Director of the Scottish Poetry Library, commented: “Poetry provides a way for children to grasp the experience of war and its consequences imaginatively, and we’re very pleased to be supporting Poppyscotland in their creative approach to education”. For more info on the Scottish Poetry Library visit www.spl.org.uk

Learning and Teaching Scotland is the lead organisation involved in the development and support of the Scottish curriculum and is at the heart of all major developments in Scottish education . Visit www.LTScotland.org.uk

Determined to Succeed is the Scottish Government’s strategy for enterprise in education, through which young people will become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. http://www.determinedtosucceed.co.uk/dts/CCC_FirstPage.jsp

The **Curriculum for Excellence** is the new guidelines for learning and teaching in Scotland. It aims to create world-class learning experiences for every child, 3-18, preparing them with the skills needed for life and work in the 21st century.

Lieutenant Colonel JB Brown RLC is currently commanding 7 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps in Germany. He has served in a variety of posts in his 21 year career, including operational tours in Northern Ireland (twice), the first Gulf War, the Falklands and recently in Baghdad, Iraq, with operational short trips to the Balkans and Afghanistan. JB has been writing poetry for 20 years and is working on his first collection. Some examples of his work follows:

The Promise of Things to Come

Baghdad, October, 2008

Huzun haunts me,
It rises impatient,
Weaving inside my heart,
Calling to my soul.
Only the foolish desire,
Moments of frantic fear, amongst
Shards, flying almost by instinct,
Hissing, spitting furious
Flechettes and heat
Shedding copper jacketed poison,
Inverting and shredding the air.
Who would choose such a fate?
With nothing to show
But memories of pain,
A glint of hanging metal
Broken fragments of triumph,
And only blood to slake the serpent,
With the promise of things to come.

The Boneyard

Taji and Baghdad, 21-23 October 2008

The Boneyard at Taji
Holds the detritus of war.
Lost and dangerous toys, skeletons
Seeking their previous owners,
Whose stories are embedded
In the rusting metal,
Just as metal was embedded
In them.
If only the silent hulks
Could speak of the
Interior terror, the sweat,
Of glad hails of fleeting victory,
And the darkness and
Sporadic tracer light,
Before their own demise.

Burnt and scoured by the sun,
The messages of aftermath
Are written on their sides,
With a graffiti of love,
Hope and comedy.
But the broken toys
Would weep if they could,
The same as their ancestors
At Normandy and El Alamein.
And they would speak of fragility
And honour,
And furious pain.