



Their Finest Hour's 'Save Our Stories: The Big WW2 Preservation Weekend' FULL INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In partnership with researchers at the University of Oxford, our school has agreed to take part in a major national initiative to digitally collect stories/memories/objects held by the public related to Britain and the Commonwealth's involvement in the Second World War. The project is called 'Their Finest Hour' and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We would like to invite your child, along with the rest of their class, to assist with this project by finding and recording stories or objects from either your family or local history to send to the project. We very much hope you would like your child to be involved, but before you decide, it is important that you understand what this will involve.

Why is this project happening?

The stories and objects related to the war are now passing from memory or being lost. Oxford is trying to capture these and digitally preserve them for future generations. They are looking for stories or objects related to the everyday experience (on the home front) of men, women, and children; or to service personnel; or to local events; but importantly from all nationalities who helped Britain and the Commonwealth's war effort. They are looking for the ordinary as well as the extraordinary: 'every story matters'.

The Remembrance weekend of 11th-12th November 2023 has been chosen for a big push to save as many stories as possible. Oxford are really keen to involve schools in this national initiative.

For more information see their website at theirfinesthour.org.

Why has my child been invited to be involved in this research?

We are inviting your child because they are in year **[insert]**, studying **[insert subject]**. All pupils in their class are invited to be involved in this research. This is in addition to a series of national events and open calls for stories that Oxford is conducting throughout 2023.

Does my child have to be involved?

No. You can read about the project before deciding whether to allow your child to be involved. If you do agree to their involvement, you may withdraw your child at any time, without giving a reason and without any effect on their education, by advising the school or researchers of this decision.

The school will tell you if your child is also allowed to take part in the activity but not send the material to the project to go into the online collection. However, as noted above Oxford is trying to preserve as many stories and objects as possible with this project for future generations so we would love to include your child's story. As the motto states 'Every Story Matters'.

What will my child be asked to do?

On or around the weekend of the 11th-12th November your child will be asked to do the following:

- Find a story and any related objects to do with your family's involvement in WW2 or a friend

- or a story about your town/village/local community
- Record the story. This could be just a matter of writing it down or typing it into a computer, or could involve photos of some objects (e.g. letters, diaries, souvenirs), or could even be a short interview with someone
- Send the story to us (see below) or Bring everything they have assembled into school where the teacher will help them send it to Oxford.
- You, or a responsible adult, will be asked to sign a 'Story/Consent' form in which you agree for the project to store and publish online the things your child has sent in, we will also ask for your contact details at that point if there are any questions. The full terms and conditions for the project can be found at:
<https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk/files/tfhvolunteerinformationsheetpdf>

Sending us the story

There are a variety of means by which you and your child can send in the story. You can use any of these or you can bring in the items and your child's teacher will help you do this.

1. Use our online upload process at: <https://tinyurl.com/sos-submit> or



– you'll be asked to either upload a scan of a completed 'Story/Consent' form or type in details about the story, and then add any files (e.g. photos, recordings, etc).

This will allow you to attach images, videos, documents, etc. It will also ask you to attach a scanned/photographed version of the completed 'story/consent' form, but if you have not done this it will give you the option of completing it online and for you as the parent/guardian to agree consent.

Or

2. Post it all to us in an envelope (c/o Dr Stuart Lee, IT Services, University of Oxford, 13 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6NN).
 This could be papers, memory sticks, CDs/DVDs, etc but we would strongly advise people not to send us original copies of anything valuable. If you do take this approach you must also include a completed 'story/consent' with every separate story submitted.

Or

3. Email it all to us at sos@it.ox.ac.uk.
 You can attach any files associated with the story. Every story should be sent as a separate email and should also include a photo/scan of the completed 'story/consent' form signed by you as the parent/guardian/responsible adult. You will automatically get a reminder though with a link to an online version of the story/consent forms if you forget. **N.B. without a completed form (either in paper or online) we are not able to use the material.**

For example, your child finds a relative who was alive during the war or whose parents were. They make a short film on their phone of the relative talking about what they remember. They also have found a few letters which they take photos of. The relative or you as the parent/guardian complete a short paper form and your child then brings all the material into the school and the teacher helps them send it to the project.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

Taking part in this project is hopefully very low risk, but some issues could arise:

- The Second World War was a very traumatic experience for those who lived through it. It is possible that when talking to someone about the story your child may be exposed to upsetting details, or the person remembering the events may get upset. The project or the school can provide guidance on how to deal with this.
- Whilst we will not be sharing personal details of anyone involved, and these will all be stored securely at Oxford, it is possible that within the story itself some details may be included that identify an individual from the time (e.g. 'This story is about my great-Uncle Albert Bloggs ...'). The risk then is of some information being made available about the named individual that perhaps should not be made public. The project will check everything sent to it before it makes material public and if anything suggests there may be an issue they will get in touch with the teacher. Also if after the collection goes live on 6th June 2024 you see anything you wish had not been published you can contact the project and they will remove it.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

By taking part in this project your child will gain a greater understanding of such things as your family's history, local history, and the Second World War. They will have experienced what it is like to search for stories/objects, possibly what it is like to interview someone, and used their design and technology skills to get these online to the project. In addition, if this is a family story, it will be preserved in a national collection by the University of Oxford.

What information will be collected and why is this necessary?

Any material sent to the project such as a story, memory, photographs of objects, interviews with a family member will be placed in Oxford's online archive (launched on 6th June 2024) which will be shared for free worldwide. A copy of anything sent will also be held on Oxford University's secure preservation systems.

As mentioned earlier when your child submits the material we will also need an agreement from you as the parent/guardian to say we can store and share the material in the archive. This can be completed on paper and photographed and sent to us or through a form on our web site. When you do this we will ask for your name and a contact email in the unlikely event we need to follow-up with any questions. We will store this data in a secure location at the University of Oxford and will not share it with anyone.

Will this be published? Could my child be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The aim is to create a free online resource for anyone to use of all these stories, memories, and objects. Anything your child sends to us if accompanied by the agreement for us to use it will go into this online collection. We may also be interviewed or write articles on the project where we may use some of the material your child submits but neither you nor your child will be identifiable from this. Your contact details will never be published.

Who is funding this project?

The project is being funded, currently, through a two-year grant from the UK's National Lottery Heritage Fund.

What should I do next?

Your child's school will have contacted you about the project. Your child will then be working on finding a story and collecting information. You may be able to help them with this. Apart from that what we will need you to do is to provide agree to the story your child has assembled being used in our project (you can either do this by completing a paper form or online once the material has been sent to us).

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research, or I wish to complain?

You should first speak to the teacher who is leading this activity at the school with any questions.

If you have a detailed question about any aspect of the project, please contact us c/o theirfinesthour@ell.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

- Chair, Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee; Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, Headington, Oxford OX3 7GB

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>. There is a full data privacy policy available on request and online.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the project with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Their Finest Hour, c/o Faculty of English Language and Literature, St Cross Building, Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UL
University email: theirfinesthour@ell.ox.ac.uk