

Introduction to War and Peace Island Themes

Global War of Empires – World War 1 took place in countries across the world with the global empires of Germany, Britain, France, the Ottoman Turkish, Austria-Hungary, Russia, China and Japan all involved.

Loss and Grief – across the world families lost loved ones to the war. Soldiers, sailors, airmen and labourers on the battlefield, nurses and doctors looking after the injured, people displaced from their homes by war who did not survive the trauma of having to move, and civilians killed in conflict.

Women and War – women were not allowed to be soldiers during World War 1 but played pivotal roles in the war effort in other ways. They worked in factories and fields, taking the place of men on the front; became nurses and doctors working in field hospitals on the front and at home to care for the sick, injured and dying; they looked after large families of children at home without their husband by their side. These jobs were often difficult and dangerous.

Impact at Home – although most of the fighting during World War 1 took place overseas, life for people on the Isle of Wight also changed. Many volunteered to defend the Island in case of attack, food was in short supply because it could not be easily imported, and ferries/ private vessels were commandeered for the war effort.

Medical Care – during World War 1 a lot of innovation took place in medical care to support military personnel and civilians suffering physical and mental conditions caused by the experience of war. Hospitals and hospital ships became numerous and employed a large number of skilled men and women who cared for the sick.

Making for War – during World War 1 a lot of factories changed what they made and focused on manufacturing products that were used for the war effort including the building of ships and aircraft.

Under the Waves – a strong feature of World War 1 in the English Channel was the introduction of submarine warfare. Submarines were a relatively recent invention and still highly dangerous to serve in. However, both British and German submarines sank numerous naval and merchant ships in the Channel. Waters off the Isle of Wight, being close to Portsmouth and Southampton, were target areas for German U-boats.

Building up to War – World War 1 did not just happen in 1914, it had been building up for a long time before then. Many empires across the world (particularly in the global north) scrambled to control territory especially in the global south for reasons of wealth and power. They became increasingly reliant on their military strength for defence and aggression. Diplomacy became less important.

Unfinished Business WW2 – sadly the peace settlement that ended WW1 in 1918 did not bring peace to the world. Hitler and the Nazi Party were able to exploit bad feeling in Germany and Austria-Hungary about their treatment in this settlement, and in 1939 war broke out



again. Even today in 2022, conflict in Ukraine has its roots in C20th conflict (WW1, WW2 and the Cold War).

Peace at Last? - When WW2 ended peace was declared and celebratory parties were held in streets across the Britain and its empire. Yet by the 1950s, a new 'Cold War' had developed between the USSR, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, USA and Canada which led to the establishment of NATO. The current conflict in Ukraine has its roots in C20th conflict.