

National
Theatre
Learning



WarHorse

based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo
adapted by Nick Stafford

Education pack

In association with
Handspring Puppet Company

War Horse

Education pack

Contents

Foreword	3
The National's production	4
The story	
Synopsis	5
Michael Morpurgo	11
Putting the production together	
The script	15
Research	16
Puppet and character	17
Puppet rules	18
Cast interviews	21
First World War	29
Learning: Year 6 Literacy Unit of Work	38
Learning: KS3 English Scheme of Work	44
Multimedia Resources	75

This workpack is published by and copyright The Royal National Theatre Board
Reg. No. 1247285
Registered Charity No. 224223

Views expressed in this workpack are not necessarily those of the National Theatre

Editors
Emma Gosden
Ben Clare

Design
Clare Parker

Directors
Marianne Elliott
and Tom Morris

NT Education
National Theatre
South Bank
London SE1 9PX
T 020 7452 3388
F 020 7452 3380
E educationenquiries@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Workpack contributors
Dawn Ingleson (*War Horse* Learning Manager);
Emma Gosden
Polly Findlay (original staff director on *War Horse*);
Heather Neill;
Robert Butler;
Lyn Sear (independent literacy consultant);
Louise Elstone
and Sam Haseler
(from Ellen Wilkinson School)

The production photographs used in this education pack show various *War Horse* London casts since 2007.



Click on this arrow, when you see it, for more online resources.

Further production details:
nationaltheatre.org.uk

Foreword

Our collaboration with Handspring Puppet Company on an adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's seemingly unadaptable novel caught the audience's imagination like nothing else. It rose in every respect to the Olivier Theatre's glorious challenges and delivered to its weeping audience an emotional transfiguration out of bent bamboo and brown gauze. It captured perfectly our continuing determination to insist that we are nothing without an awareness of our history, and just as little without a furious curiosity about our present and our future.

Nicholas Hytner
Director of the National Theatre

Welcome to the National Theatre's education pack for *War Horse*,

which is full of information and thoughts about the production and how it has been made. It offers perspectives from the creative team, performers and teachers, including interviews, a synopsis and articles. The pack has been created with teacher and student in mind so that any visit to see *War Horse* can be enhanced by reading it or using the schemes of work for Key Stage 3 or Year 6 respectively.

Online

There are a number of short films available online and as links from this pack, giving yet more insight into the show's creative process. There are clips of the horse puppets themselves, conversations with Handspring who made the puppets and further interviews with the directors. If you are interested in design you can link to the designer Rae Smith's website pages on *War Horse* and flick through the actual sketch book that she created for the show.

Workshops

National Theatre Learning offers workshops at the New London Theatre on puppetry and the play's central theme of war, led by members of the *War Horse* Company. We aim to reveal the creative process in as many ways as possible to share the excitement and knowledge of making theatre with young people and teachers.

We offer free post-show discussions, advertised via the *War Horse* website; page-to-stage sessions led from the stage by members of the company including the assistant directors; and bespoke, pre-show Q&A sessions led by members of the company. The *War Horse* Learning programme is growing day by day and we will update activity on the NT Learning website and the *War Horse* website.

Getting involved

We hope you find this pack useful and insightful: as with the show, it is a living piece of work which will grow over time. Please give us your comments via the feedback section at the back of the pack.

War Horse is on Broadway in New York and will open in Toronto, Canada in February 2012. It is reaching out to more and more teachers and students in schools and colleges in the UK and around the world. If you want to get involved in future projects – big or small – then add your contact details and thoughts via the feedback section at the back.

Dawn Ingleson
War Horse Learning Manager
October 2011

The National Theatre's production of *War Horse*

Production chronology

October 2007

The National Theatre of Great Britain in association with Handspring Puppet Company first staged its production of *War Horse* on the Olivier stage.

February 2008

War Horse wins six Laurence Olivier Awards including Best New Play and Best Director.

October 2008

Due to phenomenal demand, the production is revived in the Olivier Theatre at the National.

March 2009

The production transfers to the New London Theatre in the West End.

October 2009

The Queen and Prince Philip see the show.

April 2011

The Broadway production of *War Horse* opens at Lincoln Center in New York and receives wide critical acclaim.

June 2011

The New York production wins five Tony Awards including Best Play, plus a Special Award for Handspring Puppet Company.

February 2012

War Horse opens at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Canada.

June 2012

An extensive tour of the US begins at the Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles.

Directors

Marianne Elliott and **Tom Morris**

Designer/Drawings

Rae Smith

Puppet Design and Fabrication

Basil Jones & Adrian Kohler
for **Handspring Puppet Company**

Lighting Designer

Paule Constable

Director of Movement and Horse Choreography

Toby Sedgwick

Puppetry Directors

Basil Jones & Adrian Kohler

Video Designers

Leo Warner and **Mark Grimmer**
for **Fifty-Nine Productions Ltd**

Music

Adrian Sutton

Songmaker

John Tams

Sound Designer

Christopher Shutt

Puppetry Consultant

Mervyn Millar

Associate Directors

Alex Sims and **Kathryn Ind**

Associate Puppetry Directors

Finn Caldwell and **Toby Olié**



Synopsis - *War Horse* the play

5 August 1912.

CAPTAIN NICHOLLS is sketching the countryside of Devon. He is interested in a foal – half thoroughbred, half draught horse – as the SONG MAN sings of the changing seasons and course of nature, and our brief time on the earth where we will be “only remembered for what we have done.” The foal is gradually penned in by fencing and an auction begins, conducted by CHAPMAN CARTER. The bidding quickly rises between TED NARRACOTT and his brother, ARTHUR. They are entrenched in a family feud, and each wants the foal for his son. Their bickering alarms the foal. When Ted – who has been drinking – finally makes the winning bid of 39 guineas, ALBERT Narracott is worried his father is spending their mortgage money: they’d only come to buy a calf, not a horse. Ted is knocked over by the foal as he tries to get a rope round its neck; and in his embarrassment, Ted lashes out at his son. Back at their farm, ROSE NARRACOTT is furious that her husband has wasted the money. She puts Albert in charge of bringing the horse on so that when he’s grown they can sell him at a profit. Albert feeds the foal, and names him JOEY. As the Song Man sings of the year turning, Albert teaches Joey a special whistle call and they get to know one another.

July 1914.

Two years pass; Joey has grown up and has learnt to take Albert on his back. Captain Nicholls makes sketches of them together. Arthur and his son BILLY watch them out riding and Arthur vows to get the horse for himself. Rose congratulates Albert on how he’s brought the horse on. Albert swears he’ll find a way to keep him. At night, Ted tries to put a collar on Joey and,

when he won’t take it, whips him. Albert intervenes and Ted calls for his gun to shoot the horse. It turns out that he has bet his brother 39 guineas that Joey can plough a furrow by Plough Sunday, in seven days time. If he loses, Arthur gets the horse. At first Albert refuses, then reluctantly agrees to teach Joey to plough. He tells Rose that he hates his father. Rose explains they should love Ted because “he has fought and worked for everything we have.” It’s only because he didn’t go to South Africa to fight in the Boer War alongside Arthur that Ted is made to feel a failure, even though he stayed at home to manage the family farm. Albert asks for a promise that if he wins the bet, he can keep Joey. Together, boy and horse start training. Albert warns Joey to never kick again. He wants them to be together forever. As the Song Man sings a ploughing song, Albert introduces Joey to the collar, the bridle, the reins, and finally the plough – though the horse still can’t manage to pull it. Billy comes to watch, and is chased by the Goose. The boys taunt each other and start to fight.

5 August 1914.

The wager begins and the ground that Joey is to plough is measured. After a false start, Joey finally pulls his plough to victory as the villagers sing ‘Rolling Home’. A peal of church bells stops the celebration, and Carter announces that this means the war has begun. “Those are the last bells you’ll hear until the war is ended.” All the village men in the Yeomanry will be sent abroad immediately, “to sort the Kaiser out and be back in time for tea.” Albert is delighted that Joey is finally his, but in no time there is a muster on the village green as horses are gathered to go overseas with the army. SERGEANT ALLAN is enlisting men and offers to pay



Left: Joey (Ruth Rogers/Thomas Wilton/Matt Forbes)
Right: Joey as a foal (Sarah Mardell and Vanessa-Faye Stanley) and Albert (Jack Monaghan)
PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND

Synopsis - *War Horse* the play

£40 for a trooper's mount, £100 for an officer's; Ted sees an opportunity to make a profit. Arthur gives Billy, who is to be orderly to CAPTAIN STEWART, a knife that was his grandfather's, to bring him luck. Ted brings Joey to offer him for sale to Captain Nicholls. Sergeant Allan agrees he is a fine horse and they settle on £100. Albert is desperate when he discovers what his father has done. He tries to get the Captain to believe that Joey has a nasty streak, but has to admit that he is really just spirited. Albert offers to volunteer, but at 16 is too young. Nicholls promises one day to show Albert the sketches of him and Joey together, and gives his word that the horse will be well cared for. Albert says goodbye to his horse and solemnly swears they will be together again, as the Song Man sings 'Hoorah for the Scarlet and the Blue': "And no more will I go harvesting Or gathering the golden corn For I've took the good King's shilling And I'm off tomorrow morn."

Rose thinks her husband's heart must be stone, to have done this deal, but he says "We're at war, Rose." "Aren't we just" is her response.

6 November 1914.

Newly-promoted Major Nicholls is training Joey for war by firing a pistol near his head, and Joey quickly learns. They are posted to France in the morning, and the men are ordered to stop polishing harness and uniform buttons: "We don't want anything to flash in the sun and

give us away." Nicholls and Captain Stewart discuss the relative merits of their horses, Joey and TOPHORN, and wonder how they will get on. They let the two horses out in the paddock together to get to know one another, and get any fighting over and done with. Tophorn wins out as the dominant horse.

Horses and men board ship for Calais, reprising 'The Scarlet and the Blue', where they see dreadfully wounded soldiers being shipped home. Nicholls teaches his men the signals that mean 'Halt', and 'Enemy spotted'. He rallies them by telling them of the havoc the Kaiser has unleashed. "They must be stopped, and you... are the men to do it."

12 November 1914, in the Marne Valley.

They spot enemy infantry. The bugler sounds 'Fall in', then 'Mount', they draw their swords and advance. Just as they are ready to charge, machine gun fire breaks out; they have been ambushed, and Nicholls is blown off his horse. Stewart shouts to the men to 'fall back!' but it is too late for most of them. The Song Man sings a Christmas song over the slain men.

Christmas Day 1914, Devon.

Ted and Rose give Albert a bicycle. Rose hopes this gift will break the silence between son and father, but Albert still thinks of nothing but Joey. Arthur brings a parcel for Albert that he has picked up at the post office. Albert is



Tophorn (Stephen Harper/Stuart Angell/Thomas Goodridge) and Joey (Ruth Rogers/Thomas Wilton/Matt Forbes)

PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

Synopsis - *War Horse* the play

at first thrilled to find Major Nicholls' sketchbook, with drawings of him and Joey; then he reads the letter telling him this is a bequest – the Major has been killed in action. There have been other telegrams received in the village, bringing bad news from the front: Thomas Bone, Carter and John Gregg have all been killed. There's no news yet of Billy. Suddenly, Albert realises Nicholls must have been riding Joey. His mother is furious that he cares more for the horse than the men who have died, but tries to comfort him. When she goes to fetch something for him, he quickly tears a picture of Joey from the sketchbook and dashes off on his new bicycle. Rose returns and panics that he has gone.

March 1915.

Behind British lines. Captain Stewart tells Trooper Billy Narracott – who is shaking violently with nerves – to ride Joey. “Your horse – he belonged to your family, didn't he?” “To my cousin, sir.” The buglers sound ‘Trot’, ‘Gallop’, then ‘Charge’, and the troopers ride into battle and shells and machine gun fire create havoc, as Billy shouts ‘where are the guards?’ Horses scream as they run into the barbed wire, but Joey and Tophorn keep going.

INTERVAL

March 1915, Calais.

Albert has joined the Yeomanry. SERGEANT THUNDER, who doesn't believe Albert is 19, as he says, tells him the Yeomanry has been disbanded, so he's now in the infantry. Albert is dismayed, telling the incredulous sergeant that he's looking for his horse and showing him the sketch of Joey. Everything Thunder says is bellowed, and he now roars at DAVID TAYLOR, who has been caught laughing. He gives a French lesson before telling them they are all to take a shovel and start digging trenches. “We're making ourselves tres comfortable.” The Song Man sings ‘Goodbye Dolly I must leave you’, and the men join in.

Paulette's farm: Captain Stewart and Billy have been taken captive by German soldiers. HAUPTMANN FRIEDRICH MÜLLER is shooting horses trapped and injured on the wire. When the prisoners are searched, Billy's knife is found, and when he struggles to retrieve it, KARL kills him with it. Friedrich calms the situation and reveals that he speaks English. Joey and Tophorn are led on, and Friedrich asks their names. He talks to them in English to comfort them, telling them they will now join the German cavalry. Tophorn reminds him of his own horse, Siegfried, who was killed under him. DR SCHWEYK and COLONEL STRAUSS, speaking in

German, say that the horses must be used to pull an ambulance and fetch the wounded. Friedrich thinks they will resist and have to be shot, but Joey (as the Song Man sings the Plough song) shows how he has done this before, and they are both harnessed. Friedrich is surprised and admits that whoever taught Joey to plough has saved his life: if he can pull an ambulance he can stay away from the fighting.

Albert and David have been cut off from their companions after an attack and are lost at night. David thinks Albert, being a country boy, should be able to find out where they are. David decides to finish a letter to his girl, Flossie, and teases Albert “I've got the girl. You've got your horse.” He remembers how he has promised to teach his little brother to ride a bike, and Albert says he could have the one he's left in Exeter. Albert keeps hearing distant horse screams, reminding him of his quest. Surprised by a German soldier, Albert shoots him and they make a run for it.

At Paulette's farm, EMILIE finds some chocolate in the pocket of a dead soldier. She hides when she hears Friedrich coming with the horses; he is shocked to find everyone else has been killed: ‘a field of ghosts.’ Noticing Emilie, he talks to her in French, and introduces her to the horses. When her mother, PAULETTE, sees this she is terrified and tells Emilie to go back to the cellar. Friedrich explains that the little girl reminds him of his own, Gisa; he longs to go home and talks to the horses of how beautiful it is there. Realising that perhaps no one now knows where he is, he decides to take the ambulance orderly's uniform and stay with the horses. He pretends that Müller is dead.



From left: Nurse Annie Gilbert (Louise Kempton), Albert (Jack Holden) and David Taylor (Danny Dalton)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, NOV 2011

Synopsis - *War Horse* the play

August 1915.

Back in Devon, Rose has a letter from Albert. He is sorry for running away; he has a new chum, David; he's been made a lance corporal; but he is still looking for Joey. Rose is still angry with Ted and wishes it was him in France, not Albert.

As she reads the letter, and the Song Man sings of the turning years, Emilie helps Friedrich look after the horses, and in another part of the countryside, Albert and David discuss their next charge.

Christmas 1916, Paulette's farm.

Karl leads on two exhausted horses, COCO and HEINE, pulling a huge gun. Friedrich recognises Karl and knows he is dangerous. Emilie calls out in the English she has learnt: "Calm down Joey", which gives them away. Karl realises the ambulance orderly is really Friedrich, and Friedrich knows the game is up – Joey and Topthorn will have to help pull the gun. When Joey resists, Karl threatens to shoot him, but Friedrich tells him not to be stupid. "You need them." They leave.

Time passes and the war continues. Albert and David join an offensive movement over the top into No Man's Land. Albert is injured and David drags him to safety.

Joey and Topthorn are still pulling the gun, but the other two horses are close to death and are abandoned. Topthorn, too, is weaker.

October 1918.

SERGEANT FINE is patrolling with Albert and David, tracking a gun carriage. Albert thinks he sees one of the 'dead' horses twitch, and the group react with alarm. They see someone approaching. It is Emilie, who says in French that she has lost her horse. Albert recognises the phrase he has learnt, and asks if she has seen the Germans. She has, they are all around. He says he understands how she feels about the horses. The Sergeant orders the boys to take her to Headquarters and find out what she knows. Albert is still concerned about the dying horse, which he dispatches with his bayonet. In despair, Albert realises that there is no hope that Joey can still be alive, and throws down his picture. A cylinder of mustard gas lands and Emilie flees. David urges them away, forcing Albert to put on his gas mask; and the Song Man sings of love and loss and the change of the seasons.

9 November 1918.

Friedrich talks to RUDI about the horses, who are now quite weak. They speak in English so that Karl isn't able to understand. The rumours from home are that the Germans aren't going to win the war. They must get rid of the Kaiser and make a democracy. Karl demands that they speak in German. Topthorn's cough is worse, and he collapses and dies. Friedrich mourns the noble horses lost in this war. A terrible sound is heard getting



Albert Narracott (Jack Holden)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, NOV 2011

Synopsis - *War Horse* the play

closer and closer. A British tank appears, killing Friedrich who stands between it and the horses. Joey confronts the tank but is finally forced to flee and leave his dead friends.

For the first time in his life, Joey is alone. He gallops and gallops, and runs into barbed wire. He is in No Man's Land, between the two sides.

November 1918.

GEORDIE, a sentry in the British trench, glimpses something moving in No Man's Land. Sergeant Thunder thinks his eyes must be playing tricks. A German in the opposite trench, MANFRED, also sees the horse and, waving a white flag, goes out to fetch him. Geordie doesn't want the Germans to take this prize, so he too goes out with a white flag. Together, they help Joey, and finally toss a coin for which side will take him. Geordie wins.

11 November 1918, a British camp hospital.

Albert has been blinded by the gas, but is told he will recover his sight. Geordie and Sergeant Thunder lead Joey in ("The men have got it into their heads he's special"). He is inspected by VETERINARY OFFICER MARTIN, who thinks he must have been a fine animal once. Thunder recognises David and Albert – "You were the one badgering me about effing horses." Martin prepares to shoot Joey since no-one can be spared to tend to his injuries. David tries to encourage his depressed friend by telling him about the sick horse. "I had a horse once," says Albert. "Joey, he was called." Martin pulls the trigger against Joey's head, but his gun jams. Albert makes his special call and Joey reacts.

Finally, the two are reunited.

A bell chimes eleven times, signalling the war's end.

The Song Man sings: 'Only remembered for what we have done', and everyone joins in as Albert and Joey finally return to Devon.

Writing *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo has written over 100 books for children and adults. He wrote *War Horse* in 1982 and, 25 years later in October 2007, the novel was adapted into a play and staged by the National Theatre, with Handspring Puppet Company.



Michael Morpurgo
PHOTO BY GRAHAM BARRETT

17 April 2008 was the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Merkem, or the Battle of the Kippe. The Belgian army retook the hamlet of de Kippe. It was a significant advance, much celebrated by the Belgians. To mark the occasion of this first Belgian victory, my grandfather Emile Cammaerts, a great poet and Belgian patriot, named my mother, who was born on April 18th 1918, Kippe. It is the name by which I've known her all my life. This is the first of many diverse influences that contributed to my writing *War Horse* many decades later.

I grew up in London just after the Second World War, a London of bombsites and ration books. I played in bombsites (surely the best playgrounds ever made.) We had cellars for dens, crumbling walls to climb, and in amongst the rubble I made endless discoveries. An old kettle, a shoe, a penny coin, a burnt book – they all became my treasures. Only later came the growing awareness of what war had done, not just to buildings, but to people's lives.

My mother often wept when she talked about the war. On the mantelpiece was a photo of my Uncle Pieter, who was shot down in 1941, two years before I was born. He looked back at me when I looked at him, and I knew he wanted to say something but couldn't. I used to talk to him sometimes, I remember. I wanted to get to know him.

A friend of the family used to come to tea sometimes. My mother always told me I must not stare at him, but I always did. I could not help myself. His face and hands were horribly scarred. I knew he had been shot down in the war and suffered dreadful burns. Here's what war did. It burned flesh. It killed my uncle. It made my mother weep. So I grew up with the damage of war all around me. I learned that buildings you can put up again, but lives are wrecked forever.

As a schoolboy I read the great poets of the First World War – Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden, Edward Thomas, Thomas Hardy. I learned of 'the men who marched away', of 'the millions of the mouthless dead', understood 'the pity of war'. I read Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. I saw the film. I went to see Joan Littlewood's *Oh! What a Lovely War*. Britten's great *War Requiem*, the pictures of Paul Nash and Stanley Spencer left an indelible impression on me.

In my early thirties, in 1975, we moved from Kent to Iddesleigh in Devon where my wife Clare and I were setting up Farms for City Children, an educational charity we hoped would enrich the lives of urban children by enabling them to spend a week of their young lives living and working down on the farm.

We found ourselves living in a small tight-knit community – Iddesleigh was a parish of less than 200 people, a church, a post office, a village shop, a pub. Here we settled, and began our project. I had written one or two books already but now for the first time I came across a subject that I cared about deeply, one that I felt I could write from the heart.

I was in the pub, The Duke of York. "Are you writing another book Michael?" said the old man sitting opposite me by the fire, cradling his pint. I told him that I'd come across an old painting of a cavalry charge in the First World War. The British cavalry were charging up a hill towards the German position, one or two horses already caught up on the barbed wire. I was trying, I told him, to write the story of the First World War, as seen through the eyes of a horse. "I was there in 1916," the old man told me, his eyes filling with tears. "I was there with the horses too." He talked on for hours

Writing *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo

about the horse he'd loved and left behind at the end of the war, how the old horse had been sold off to the French butchers for meat.

I determined then and there to tell the story of such a horse. But how to tell it? I had to find a way that didn't take sides. So I conceived the notion I might write the story of the First World War as seen through a horse's eye, a horse that would be reared on a Devon farm, by the forebears of the village people I knew, a horse that is sold off the farm to go to the front as a British cavalry horse, is captured by the Germans and used to pull ambulances and guns, winters on a French farm. It would be the horse's eye view of the universal suffering of that dreadful war in which 10 million men died, and unknown millions of horses.

But I had yet to be convinced that I could make this work, that the horse might respond credibly, might understand the needs and anxieties of the people he came to know.

Because I had been working for so long on the farm with the children, I was of course aware of the sensibilities of children towards animals, and vice versa.

But it was one incident in particular that convinced me I could make my story work.

A young boy from Birmingham came to the farm with his classmates some 25 years ago. He was called Billy. Billy, I was told by the teachers, had been fostered

by several different families, was withdrawn and so tormented by a stammer that by the age of seven he had given up speaking at all.

One November evening I had come to the farmhouse to read to the children. As I came into the stable yard behind the house I found Billy standing there under the stable light, talking freely to one of the horses. He spoke confidently, knowing he was not being judged or mocked. And I had the very strong impression that the horse was listening, and understanding too. It was an unforgettable moment for all three of us, I think. It was that extraordinary, inspirational moment that gave me the confidence I needed to begin writing *War Horse*.

This article was written for the *War Horse* London programme



Iddesleigh village square, Devon
PHOTO COURTESY OF BEAFORD RTS, DEVON (BEAFORDOLDARCHIVE.ORG.UK)

A life in writing

Michael Morpurgo was interviewed by the National Theatre during the original *War Horse* rehearsals in 2007, describing his early career, how he wrote the novel, and how he felt about seeing his work brought to life on stage. Here are some exclusive extracts from the transcript of that interview.

I stuttered into writing. I wasn't a good reader at school: I read comics because I liked picture stories that moved fast. Then I read one book that changed my life – called *Treasure Island*. It was the first time I'd ever found that enormous thrill of going on an adventure inside a book. Sadly, that early enthusiasm did get trampled on by some teachers who – as happens now sometimes – were using texts for tests. I wasn't any good at that – I didn't write very well, my handwriting was terrible, my spelling wasn't much better, my grammar was dreadful. And you don't like what you fail at. So I decided I was going to be a rugby player instead. Books went out of the window for years and I became a really good rugby player.

I went into the army for a variety of reasons, mostly because I wanted to play rugby, and I knew I could travel. I didn't really think about what the army did, or what I was going to do there. And I didn't like it. I met my wife and she didn't like it either, so I came out rather

fast and went to university. And at university – where I also wasn't much good at writing essays, because I still had very little self worth when it came to putting my ideas on paper – I read a book called *Gawain and the Green Knight*. And I remember feeling this terrific thrill going through me again, something I'd always remember.

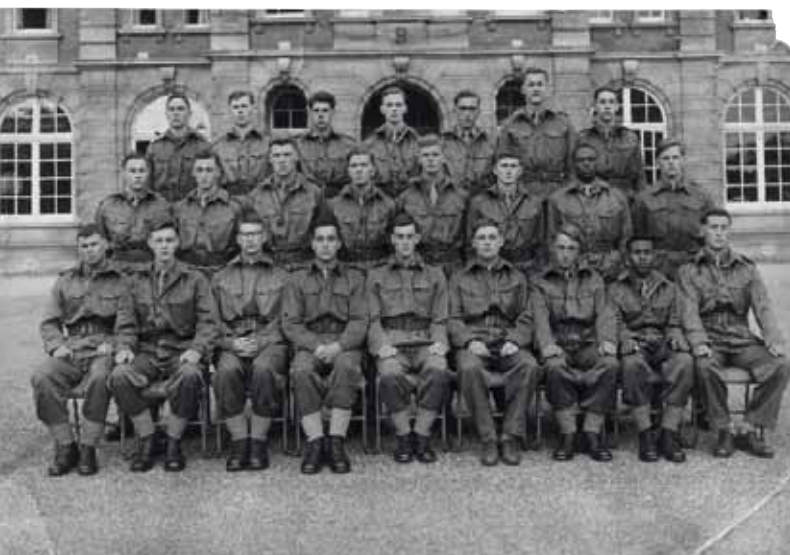
I became a teacher after leaving university and found myself trying to engage the children in front of me. And to engage thirty-five 10- and 11-year-olds is really difficult. I decided I could do this by reading them stories: if I read one with a passion, they would listen. But I was reading a story one day that didn't work. I looked up and the children were all yawning, picking their noses and looking out the window. I went home and said to my wife, What am I going to do, I've got an entire book to get through – 14 more chapters? And she said, Don't go on boring them, you've done that once. Tell them a story – why read them a story – tell them a story. Go in there and tell it?, I said, They're 11-year-olds, they'll kill me. She said, Are you a coward? I said, Yes.

But I went in the next day and just delivered this story I'd made up. Those were 10 minutes that changed my life. I found that I could make all these children listen. I told a soap throughout the week. The headteacher liked it and said she had a friend who worked in publishing and would I like to write the stories out and give them to her on Monday morning. I did. And I got lucky.

The writing process

I have a big problem with repetitive strain syndrome. How you write is very important, and it's taken me years to devise the best way of being. I used to write at a desk and the more enthusiastic I got, the smaller the writing was, the tighter the shoulder clamped up and I really did myself awful injuries. I remember saying to Ted Hughes that I was having great problems and he said, I stand up and write at an easel. So I did the same thing, but my feet hurt: so that was no good.

I read a biography of Robert Louis Stevenson and he was in a photograph, sitting on a bed. He had piled up all these pillows behind him, his legs were drawn up in front of him and he had a little exercise book. He was just sitting, relaxed. I tried it and it's brilliant, because your back and your legs are supported and you've just got this little exercise book on your knee. So that's what I do now and though I still write quite small, it doesn't hurt!



Michael Morpurgo in his army days
(second row, fourth from right)
COURTESY OF MICHAEL MORPURGO

A life in writing

I never start thinking about writing a book until I have had many weeks, months and sometimes years of dreaming something around in my head. I call it my dream time and it's the most important time of writing. I didn't think of it at first: because I'd been brought up, as most kids are, to think I could do things quite quickly. Actually the better part of writing, I think most writers would agree, is that you have to spend an awful lot of time simply living in the world that you're going to be writing about. The characters will come out of that, they'll come out of the research. That takes time – and with me, it takes a lot of time. I have books that sit around in my head for 15 or 20 years before they ever even get themselves down on paper.

I can't plan it and there's no kind of recipe that works every time because every single book is different. But I try to find the principle. It's that business of letting it come slowly, not forcing the pace and somehow, when you're in the story, not being too anxious to finish it. Let the characters find a solution. When the characters are driving the story forward, then you know you've done something all right and you stop playing God yourself.

The significance of *War Horse* in Michael Morpurgo's writing career

War Horse was my fifth book, but it was my first really decent one. The others had been decent enough, but not very convincingly told: the characters didn't come off the page. When I look at them now, I feel ashamed of the first four. But *War Horse* seemed to be something a bit special and people seemed to think it was okay. Luckily it got shortlisted for the Whitbread Prize and everyone thought it would win. It didn't. But then I got really lucky. I came back home the next day, after the debacle at the Whitbread Prize, and went out with the children at our project, Farms for City Children, at 7 o'clock in the morning. I came back at about 8.30am and the phone rang. It was a very good friend of mine, who used to live down the road from us but is sadly no longer with us – Ted Hughes, who was President for Farms for City Children. He said, Michael, we'll go out for the day. He knew the state of mind I'd be in, I think. So we went fishing and ended up in a tea shop in Bideford. He leaned across the table – he hadn't mentioned the Whitbread Prize all day – and he looked me in the eye and said, "About yesterday. Prizes aren't worth very much you know, they're just a marketing tool. They're absolutely not to be worried about. And I'm here to tell you that you've written a fine book." And you think, Okay, I can do this stuff.

An understanding between children and animals

One of the reasons that books, films and plays that have animals as their central characters work rather

well with children is because children seem to have a kind of built-in sympathy for the natural world around them. Normally it's for a cat or a dog, a goldfish or a guinea pig. It could, of course, be a horse, it doesn't really matter. What matters is that they know, without being told, that these are sentient beings: if you treat them right, it makes them feel good. Children really understand that, because they feel exactly the same. If they're picked up when they're young and they're cuddled and made to feel wanted, then they feel good. Maybe we lose that when we get older. We get to think of animals as creatures that we exploit for eating purposes, for sporting purposes, for war purposes – in the case of *War Horse* – and we can forget that they feel pain, they know what it's liked to be loved and they know what it feels like to be mistreated: it hurts them physically.

These animals which cannot speak for themselves – our central characters, Joey, Topthorn and others – they are victims of whatever it is that men are doing. It is man that invents wars, man who solves problems, man that ends up trying to kill one another. If we want to eradicate ourselves in this way, that's our business – but what we've done for thousands of years, is use horses or elephants, or whatever it is, for that purpose. Children know that's inherently unfair: millions of horses didn't volunteer to die in this way. They had no particular quarrel with the German horses on the other side. They were simply used up and suffered in the process. Children get that without being told at all. I think there is an instinctive sympathy, identification, empathy, with this animal that can't speak for itself, so a child wants to speak for it.

War Horse: whose story is it?

Hand on heart, *War Horse* is not just the story of the horse. It is the story of all the men who fought in that Great War, and who died in it, and who were wounded forever by it, in their mind or in their body. It's also the story of the people whose land was fought over and whose lives were ruined.

Maybe that's why it works particularly now: when the book first came out, one of the reasons some people didn't like it was that they thought it irrelevant. We were in the middle of the Cold War. So, to all intents and purposes in the UK, war did not impinge on us any more. It was one of those things that was always a prospect and a threat, but we did not see daily on our television coffins being carried home, we didn't see bombs exploding in Baghdad. We'd just been through the Second World War, we didn't want to engage with it all.

A life in writing

In the last four or five years, certainly, and a bit more, we've all become aware that this is something young men all over the world, for whatever cause, are still going through. The First World War, I think, is the great metaphor for all wars because in a way, it was the most useless of all wars. This was absolutely a struggle between the great European powers, slicing up the world between them and deciding who should have the biggest slice of the cake.

I think many people, many historians, look at the First World War and think, Well that was a waste, a complete waste of life. After that war, there was this short intermission of 20-odd years and then there was this Second World War, which, to my way of thinking, was a complete result of the First World War. And we know what damage that has done and continues to do worldwide.

It was all begun by this great conflagration of western powers unable to negotiate their way without humiliating one another. What seems to happen time and time again is that we fight away, we humiliate one another and we expect there to be peace. But it doesn't work that way and we all should know this by now. Suddenly this book about the First World War becomes much more urgent and relevant because of the suffering that we all know is going on around us.

How it feels to have work staged or filmed

Whenever I'm lucky enough to be approached by a filmmaker, or a theatre producer, the first thing I look to is the record of the company, and of the people concerned – you need to know what it is they do. I've made mistakes in the past and got my fingers burnt once or twice – every writer has. Frankly you have to get lucky as well as be a little bit judicious. So when I was approached by the National Theatre about *War Horse*, it came on the back of a very good experience I'd had with the Bristol Old Vic for Simon Reade's production of *Private Peaceful* which had toured the country for two years. If I got a good director then someone could manage *War Horse*. But it wasn't until I was told about these extraordinary puppeteers from South Africa, Handspring, that I began to have very much confidence in it: the National Theatre wasn't likely to put its talent and money where it wasn't going to do something pretty special. But I could not conceive of how a story like this could be staged. Then I got to meet Tom Morris and Handspring – they all came down here to Devon. These people were very serious about what goes on inside a horse's head; they really wanted to know what motivated a horse, how horses behave. We went down to a farm locally to watch a horse being used to mow hay. And then we went to see the horses and men of the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, pulling

their guns and grooming their horses. I could see that there was an enormous seriousness about the way this thing was being approached. We were months away from any production, but it was being gone into in depth and with great intelligence. All that gave me enormous confidence that something extraordinary would come out of it.

They made a film of one of the workshops, of actors working with puppets which were not fully made but suggestions of puppets. And I was completely enchanted by how moving it was. Horses are really moving as they are but, funnily enough, a puppet is much more engaging. The make-believe horse which you know perfectly well is being worked by people (because it is so balletic and extraordinarily sensitive), touches your heart immensely. I knew from then on that we were going to be doing something quite extraordinary.

Putting the production together

by Polly Findlay, staff director on the original 2007 production of *War Horse*

My involvement with *War Horse* began in March 2007 when we workshoped an early version of the script over a month at the National Theatre's Studio. We took over two rehearsal rooms and the tea-machine, and for weeks on end the Studio rang to the sounds of wooden hooves as we started to work out the mechanics of cavalry charges, gun carriages and puppet tanks. Seven months and what seem like hundreds of rehearsals, meetings, script changes and cups of coffee later, we had a one-in-a-million production on our hands.

Although I've only been working in the professional theatre for a few years, I have never heard of, let alone been involved in, a production that has had as much work put into it as this one. The whole process had begun over two years before, when Nicholas Hytner (the director of the National Theatre) together with two of the NT's associate directors, Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris, began talks with the internationally renowned South African puppet company Handspring about whether it might be possible to bring such an epic story to the Olivier stage. The novel *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo has been long established as a children's classic: featuring huge numbers of characters, crossing an astonishing number of locations, taking place over a period of six years, set in the last century and narrated by a horse to boot, it seemed like an impossible story to try and render dramatically. It wasn't until Basil and Adrian (the Handspring team) came up with the first, astonishing design proposals for the Joey puppet that excitement about the project really started to run through the theatre: it seemed like the impossible might be about to happen.

The script

Nick Stafford came on board as adapter together with Rae Smith as designer, and things really began to get going. From the very beginning everybody knew this was going to be a huge project; early on the decision was taken to not make Joey the narrator, as he is in the book, but to turn the narrative inside-out and tell the story as a straight play. This entailed a huge amount of work for Nick, and we went through several drafts of the play before settling on what we eventually took into rehearsal. (We began rehearsing with draft nine, and were on something like draft 12 by Press Night!)

The major challenge with turning a book into a play tends to be structural. The kind of story that lends itself well to being told in a novel will often be reliant on a kind of narrative slow-burn, made up of several vignettes or episodes, moving from location to location and character to character at a relatively relaxed pace.

The author is able to take the time he or she wants to describe something at his or her leisure. This is, of course, because the reader is free to put down the book whenever they like, taking a break whilst knowing that they can pick up the story again later; we don't, as a rule, expect to read a book in one sitting. The job of the playwright, however, is almost completely the opposite: his audience is captive – they need to be entertained every step of the way, and to feel that the story is progressing with every dramatic beat that unfolds before them. The narrative muscle of a play needs to keep it going at all costs, and works successfully when every event on the stage seems to have come inexorably out of the one before: a good play is more like a game of consequences, when each scene could not have happened without the scene before it having unravelled in exactly the way that it did. Resolving the tension



Top: Marianne Elliott (co-director) in *War Horse* rehearsals
Above, from left: Tom Morris (co-director), Michael Morpurgo (author) and John Tams (songmaker)

PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND AND MERVYN MILLAR, September 2007

Putting the production together

between the novelistic structure already underpinning the story we were trying to tell, and the dramatic structure that we needed to draw out in order to make that story a successful play, was a huge issue in rehearsal, and accounted for many of the drafts that we went through.

Research

Outside of working on the script, early rehearsals consisted of a huge amount of group research. Everybody involved felt that, given the subject matter of the piece, we had a real responsibility to get the historical detail right. Nick had, of course, already done a lot of the work on the script, but we had to come up with all kinds of seemingly obscure historical facts and details in order to ensure that our dramatic recreation of Devon in 1912 or the Marne Valley in 1915 was a faithful representation of what might have happened. The sort of things we found ourselves trying to investigate were, at times, absolutely bizarre; I was researching the intricacies of an early twentieth-century Cornish farmer's diary at one point ('Carting dung... Sent two pigs to Redruth factory' etc) and, at another, trying desperately to find out the exact pattern of First World War bugle calls to make sure that the cavalry charges were accurate. Because so much of the action revolved around the German soldiers, and one of our heroes was a German cavalry captain, it was very important to us to make sure that the research on the German side was as accurate as the work we'd done on the British army, even though it was harder for us to access this information. Most of our research came from the Imperial War Museum, though we also made use of local county councils, lots of books and websites, and even first-hand information from various cast members' grandparents etc. A real-life sergeant came in from a nearby barracks to teach us all basic army drill; for several mornings, the huge Rehearsal Room One at the bottom of the National Theatre building became an army training ground as the entire cast were bellowed at for not standing straight, picking up the wrong foot or not having their arms at the uniform angle.



Top: Bideford Yeomanry leave for camp
PHOTO © BEAFORD ARCHIVE
Above: Nick Stafford in rehearsals
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, September 2007

Putting the production together

Puppet and character work

Because so much of the story was reliant on believing and caring about the horses, a huge amount of rehearsal time was devoted to researching the behaviour of the real-life animals and working out how best we might translate that into our puppet work. Tom Morris, one of the directors, was particularly adamant that we avoid any traces of sentimentality or anthropomorphism ('humanising' or reading human traits into animal behaviour) when dealing with the horses: we were going to portray them as if they were absolutely real. That's why, at times during the show, you might see the horses whinnying or making noise at seemingly dramatically inappropriate or sensitive moments; like real horses, our puppets give the sense that they are pursuing their own agenda rather than tuning too unnaturally into what is going on in the human world. That said, we were still keen to make sure that our horses had their own distinct character, and much time was spent with the Joey and Tophorn puppeteers drawing up lists of characteristics and tendencies that they felt were manifested in their respective horses. These lists were displayed in the room to remind us of the kind of customers we were dealing with in the horse scenes.

Basil and Adrian from Handspring were on hand throughout the rehearsal process to ensure that the way the actors were dealing with the puppets helped to make them seem like real horses. We were all astonished to discover quite how much of a puppet's authenticity is dependent not on the puppeteer inside but on how the other actors in the space behave around the puppet; the next page shows one of the lists we drew up to show actors how to help out with the believability of the horse puppets.



Top: Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler in rehearsal
Middle: A World War I working horse © IWM
Right: Toby Sedgwick, Tim Lewis and Craig Leo in rehearsal
REHEARSAL PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND, September 2007

Putting the production together

Puppet rules...

1. Horses don't like it if you look them in the eye. Either avoid doing it, or expect a definite reaction away from you if you do!
2. Remember to relate to the whole body of the horse – not just the chest and the head.
3. If you're in direct contact with a horse puppet, you automatically become to some degree responsible for manipulating it. You therefore need to keep random movements with the puppet to a minimum. Everything reads when you're relating to a puppet – keep in mind a clear intention.
4. Keep in mind that the huge mass/immobility of a horse will affect most of the direct contact you have with the puppet. Grooming, for example, will end up being quite a vigorous action – there's a real exchange of weight as the horse leans into the brush. It's up to you to puppeteer the horse's weight in a situation like this – use the cane, reverse energy etc. Keep in conversation with the puppeteer to make sure you both know who's meant to be bearing what weight and when.
5. If the puppeteer's intention as the horse is to be giving you problems – not wanting you to shoe or clean them – it'll more often than not be up to you to puppeteer the more minute specifics of how that'll work, eg the difficulty of raising a hoof or whatever it is that you're doing.
6. If you're giving a horse a treat, remember to manipulate the force of the head down into your palm.
7. If you're manipulating the neck be careful not to make it bend back unnaturally: the puppet is physically capable of things that a real horse wouldn't be...
8. If you're directly holding the puppet (particularly the horses' heads around the mouth area) make sure you hold as much of it as possible – take a big handful! – to stop it from breaking.
9. If you're playing an intention to get the horse to do something, it's helpful to keep making noise – talking, cajoling etc – as puppeteers often can't see you to read exactly what it is that you're trying to do physically.

10. If you're playing a lack of confidence with the horse, make sure you give it a wide berth as you go round the back of it. If you're playing confidence, you can stay in close but keep patting/touching round the back of it till you come out of the horse's blind spot and back into safety.

11. Don't be tempted to balance the picture by matching the position of the head puppeteer – it looks much better to keep playing with different distances away from the horse.

12. A horse – particularly an untrained one – will lean into you if you lean into him. He will lean with all his weight and love it!

13. When urging a horse or communicating, small taps or tugs are better than an all-out tug of war. A light tap or a tickle on the ribs is more effective in making a horse move away than steady pressure. Take a lesson from flies!



Finn Caldwell with Goose in rehearsals.
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, September 2007

War Horse on stage, the journey so far

by Heather Neill

In the summer of 2011, writer Heather Neill asked some of the key creative team to reflect on how they'd brought *War Horse* to the stage four years earlier; and how they now continue to develop it for stages across the world.

The directors

"Directors", admits Marianne Elliott, "are by nature control freaks and most are probably not able to co-direct". Nevertheless, she and Tom Morris have been able to share the complicated staging of *War Horse* very successfully.

Marianne says that she had previously directed "big projects on big stages with big casts, but they were all classics. So my experience was text-based, while Tom came from an alternative theatre background and was experienced in developing theatre without a set script. *War Horse* required both disciplines. Sharing in this way makes twice – not half – the work because you are both involved in everything, every question, every solution, every moment: how a line should be written or said, how a character develops, how to stage a battle scene."

Devising *War Horse* over a long period allowed for ideas to come from many members of the company. It was Toby Sedgwick (a choreographer who played Albert's father in the first production), for instance, who suggested that the young Joey could dissolve into the adult horse. Part of a director's job is to welcome ideas but also to be certain which to choose. "It was

all hands on deck", Marianne says. "There were many round-table discussions, many hours watching videos of things we'd done and talking over every single minute."

She says that this concentrated method "can give rise to arguments and conflict, but also tremendous camaraderie. It is the most complicated thing any of us has been involved in and it is hard to know when the production is finished."

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that she and Tom are still working together on new productions of *War Horse*, including the one in New York, the one in Toronto and the United States tour. For this the staging has to be flexible to be suitable for different theatres and must do without the revolve, the moving circular part of the stage which allows scenes to change quickly. As the life of *War Horse* continues into the future, Marianne is still very much part of its story.

The puppeteers

Mervyn Millar, who wrote the book *The Horse's Mouth* and was an early member of the *War Horse* team, says that casting the puppeteers isn't easy, because this is an unfamiliar experience for everyone. The people chosen are often actors new to puppetry. "At auditions we put the actors into a horse to have a go. Usually they are terrified at first, but the key skill is the ability to listen to each other, to find that the most exciting thing is sharing the mind of the character, the horse. It is a singular acting challenge, requiring calm, perfectionism and a non-egotistical approach, which is not what most actors necessarily offer."



Albert Narracott
(Jack Monaghan) on Joey
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

War Horse on stage

Being one of the team of three, two each inside Joey and Topthorn and one outside guiding, is physically demanding. Toby Olié was one of the first to manipulate Joey's hind-quarters, the back legs and tail. He describes it as "like using cross-country ski poles as the hooves pick up and tendons flex and in each hand you have a bicycle brake." He says that the team members work so closely together, "it's a bit like a three-person marriage. We think of the puppeteers as Head, Heart and Hind. The person in the centre, the Heart, is the rudder and steering wheel, the Hind the engine, the power-source. The Head is like the marketing department – ready to go at any time and making the moves look as if they are his own idea!" The "breathing" and snickering happen organically as the three puppeteers concentrate on responding to each other and give the impression of being one creature.

Mini bicycle brakes manipulate the ears, which are made of leather and are very important, like the tail, for expressing emotion. Toby says that he acquired a lump at the base of his index finger from manipulating the bicycle brakes so often. These days, the leading horse teams rotate, so that sometimes the horse puppeteers join the ensemble instead, but in the early days they took the same role for a sequence of many performances. There were often other injuries then too, such as tennis elbow and damaged backs. Nevertheless, Toby loves *War Horse* and is now a Puppetry Associate, overseeing the training of new Joey and Topthorn teams.

The designer and lighting designer

Designer Rae Smith describes how her torn strips of paper carrying background drawings came about almost by accident when she tried using a little of her sketchbook to make an illustration to be projected on screen. "And that", she says, "is how Captain Nicholls developed, as an amateur artist whose war landscapes could be used in a moving and purposeful way." Animation of her designs by 59 Productions followed.

Rae Smith and Paule Constable have worked together for over 20 years so they already knew the importance of finding the "language" of the production. This time they collaborated in an open, experimental way with the rest of the team as well. Paule describes her collaboration with Rae, "We've grown up together as artists. We spend lots of time together – watching rehearsals, having cups of tea, having meetings – and we talk and talk. Rae has very vivid ideas: she talks brilliantly about the world of the piece. I translate that into a lighting world. She doesn't say 'I want it to look like this' but she talks about theatre language and style and story-telling and I bring that into the lighting. It is a relationship built on huge amounts of trust." They have often collaborated on devised work, without a script, "So we encourage each other to be fearless. She'll push me to make things better – and being pushed to do the best you possibly can is very good for you. *War Horse* celebrates the nature of good collaboration.



Left: Rae Smith
Right: Paule Constable
PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND, CLARE PARKER

With the right conversations you can almost achieve anything...."

Paule says, "Working on *War Horse* was different from other projects because we were trying to make a piece of simple story-telling live in an epic space and we were trying to allow the audience to create most of the world of the piece themselves, in their imagination. To begin with, we had no idea if we could make this kind of simple theatre work on this scale."

Some students and teachers have asked how the lighting can make settings seem very different from each other while keeping the horses as the focus. Paule says that the directors also know the importance of concentrating attention on the horses. "The lighting for the show is very directional – the direction of the light should help to push you towards the horses. For instance, if we use diagonals in the design or where characters are placed, then the horse should be at the point of the diagonal. We rarely make anything very bright in *War Horse*. In fact, because it is a piece about suggestion rather than illustration we tend to under-light. That said, the horses are often slightly "hotter": they are follow-spotted [a spotlight follows their movement] from directly above the thrust stage rather than, as is more traditional, from the front. The follow spots run at about 50% of their strength, they are the same colour 'temperature' as the rest of the lights and they have soft edges, so they don't become a show business device! The eyes, by the way, appear to have life because they are reflective. Having low angles for the light means they catch the light and glint."

Students also ask how the horses are made to appear ghost-like. Paule says, "We do this in the trenches – by lighting the horses from low and behind – so you see their gauzy skin in silhouette and their structure as well. It makes them appear more vulnerable. In the war scenes you'll notice lots of the light is low and from behind to create this effect. In the Devon scenes the palette [the colour choices of the lighting] is warm and nostalgic. In the war it is chemical and acidic."

© Heather Neill, October 2011

Cast interview: Jamie Ballard

Jamie Ballard played Major Nicholls in the original cast of *War Horse* at the National Theatre and gave this interview in October 2007.



How long have you been an actor? Where and when did you train?

I trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School from 1999 to 2001.

Have you worked at the National Theatre before?

I was in *Saint Joan* [directed by Marianne Elliott], which was in the Olivier theatre prior to *War Horse*.

How did you come to be involved in the *War Horse* project?

I had worked with Marianne Elliott (one of the two directors) for a year at the RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company) on *Much Ado About Nothing*, which finished in January 2007; she asked me to be in *War Horse* at the end of that.

Have you worked with puppets before? What challenges – if any – did or does it present to the way you work in a rehearsal room or on stage? Did acting with puppets change the way you worked in the room, or affect the way in which your character developed?

I played Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the RSC in 2005 and puppets were used in the show as the changeling boy and as the fairies. I only encountered them briefly, in the scene where Puck and the fairies cause havoc in the mechanicals' forest rehearsal. Working with the horses on *War Horse* has been a completely different experience; I am interacting with them physically and developing a very personal relationship with them. It actually freed up the rehearsal process for me, as all the individual horses were so clearly such free spirits. No run of the scene is ever

the same, as they respond differently to – for example – whether I stroke their nose, as opposed to their ear or their neck. In essence, the horse puppets are so good that I feel that I am working with a real animal rather than with a fellow actor: there is a sense that anything can happen. This has the effect of relieving the actor of the usual pressure to keep things fresh: being with an animal can't help but put you in the moment.

Have you had much experience of working with a living playwright before? What advantages and/or challenges does this present to the actor?

I have only worked with living playwrights in the development stage of projects, which usually consists of doing readings of their new plays and then taking part in the discussions about where the pieces might go. This is the first time I've worked on a production of a play by a living playwright. It was a completely positive experience: if we felt uncomfortable with something, Nick was happy to change it to accommodate us, or if we didn't understand something he was on hand to explain it. It was a fantastic way of working, and very different to what I've been used to when working on classical pieces.

And has working with two directors rather than one affected your working process at all?

It affected me a bit at the beginning simply in that I had worked with Marianne before, so whenever Tom Morris (the other director) gave me a note or a bit of direction I would find myself unintentionally turning to Marianne to see if she agreed! Awful, I know, and I soon got a handle on that...

Marianne and Tom had very clearly defined their roles in the production, and so it ended up being incredibly helpful having two directors dealing with different aspects of the rehearsal process. It was an amazing working practice, and helped me enormously. I still did what I would normally do with Marianne on the text-based side but Tom was able to work his magic on the movement/horse/more physical side. The partnership came off brilliantly.

What have you particularly enjoyed about the *War Horse* process so far?

I have found working with the puppets absolutely extraordinary. I never thought I would be riding a horse into a cavalry charge on the Olivier stage! The feeling of teamwork and support is immense: having three guys operating this animal beneath you, quite literally carrying you through the show, is something I have found both humbling and moving.

I have also very much enjoyed working with Marianne, a director I love and respect, on a project very different to anything either of us have done before; and I have relished the chance to work with Tom and to experience his special brand of directing.

Jamie Ballard with Joey in rehearsals
PHOTO BY MERVYN MILLAR, September 2007

Cast interview: Jamie Ballard

And conversely, is there anything that you have found particularly difficult?

There were a couple of brief moments when I was worried that the story of my character – and sometimes the story in general – was being compromised or lost in order to accommodate the bigger picture or concept. Those concerns were, however, quickly addressed, and both Marianne and Tom put my mind at ease.

Apart from that, this is a breathtakingly amazing, extraordinary piece to have been a part of. I am well aware of how lucky I am.



Cast interview: Tim Lewis

Tim Lewis was one of the actors operating Tophorn, and played Major Callaghan in the original cast. He gave this interview in October 2007.



Where and when did you train?

I trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Have you worked for the National Theatre before?

I was in *The Man of Mode* in the Olivier earlier in 2007.

How did you come to be involved in the *War Horse* project?

During the run of *The Man of Mode* I was involved in one of the initial, month-long *War Horse* workshops at the National Theatre Studio.

What have you found to be the chief differences between portraying a character through puppetry and inhabiting one as an actor? And by the same token, are there any striking similarities? Which do you prefer?

The main difference for me is that as a puppeteer I can channel and focus all my energy into and through the puppet, instead of going through myself. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but I find that sometimes it gives me a little more freedom to play because the pressure – the focus of the audience – isn't on me.

I've never done any puppetry before, so this has all been a very steep learning curve for me. I love it, and thoroughly enjoy the work I'm doing on this show, but I

think that I'll always prefer acting.

How easy have you found it to adapt to working so closely as a team with the other Tophorn puppeteers?

It's been quite a hard process, simply because of the fact that there are three of us playing one part. In rehearsals there were times when we were literally all pulling in different directions! But with time, practice and a few heated discussions we were able to breathe, move and work together as one. All in all it's been an absolute joy – they're great lads.

What do you think it is about the Handspring company that makes them so unique?

They're just really, really nice guys! They have a huge amount of love, passion and joy in their work. And I think that is manifested in their astoundingly beautiful creations. I'm a big fan.

Has working with two directors rather than one affected your working process at all?

It's been quite handy, actually! When one of them has been busy sorting something else out, the other has been available to talk to in their stead. They've worked fantastically together as a team and very much speak with one voice.

What have you particularly enjoyed about the *War Horse* process so far?

I have loved learning new skills and pushing my body in new ways with the puppets. It's been a real baptism of fire into the world of puppetry, and I've loved it. The company make up an incredibly supportive and creative team and it's been both instructive and a lot of fun to work with them.

And conversely, is there anything that you have found particularly difficult?

I actually found the rehearsal process quite difficult and rather stressful at times. I think that this part of the process of working on a new play and therefore having a lot of major changes and re-working right up until opening night. My body has also found it quite difficult adapting to the job, and I've developed some problems with my wrists and in my back. But I am gradually learning how to cope with the strain and to stay strong.

Tim Lewis with Tophorn in rehearsal
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, September 2007

Cast interview: Sarah Mardel

Sarah Mardel played a variety of roles in *War Horse* at the New London Theatre from 2010 to spring 2011.



Parts played and when:

Emilie (Feb/10 – Nov/11)

Baby Joey Head (March/11 – Nov/11)

Baby Joey Heart (Feb/10 – March/11)

How much research into real-life horses' behaviour did the puppeteers do in rehearsal?

In rehearsal we had two weeks purely of horse puppetry technique and horse study. We watched videos of Monty Roberts and foal research on YouTube, as well as studying literature on horse psychology. I have to say that the horse research never really ends – all the way through our time on the production, cast members share things that we find on the internet, or film horses and foals that we come across in our daily lives. It sounds geeky but once you start you get a bit obsessed and always want to finesse your technique. When we were improvising to find new material in rehearsals, there were always puppetry associates on hand to tell us if we were acting 'out of character' for a real horse.

How did the actors begin rehearsing? With the puppets in the room from the beginning?

The puppets were in rehearsals from day one. After the read-through the horses were at every rehearsal call. When rehearsals are long and all the horse teams have learnt the scene, the puppeteers will often do scenes 'un-adorned', so without the actual puppet. They will stand with their hand on the shoulder of the person in front and do the movements and sounds of the horse, but without the cage. It would be physically impossible and dangerous for people

to be in those puppets for hours at a time and repeating movements that are strenuous on the body. So this is how we get around that in rehearsals.

When we see the performance, what should we look out for in the puppets or puppeteers?

Look out for:

- the horses breathing: what this adds to the scene and what it tells you about how the horse feels at any moment in time
- the horse noises – all made by the three horse puppeteers. How do they add to the story of how the horse feels at any given time?

- how the three puppeteers work together to create the illusion of a single animal. How they must be aware of each other but you do not see them looking at each other.

As horse puppeteers we try to work so that the audience's attention is not drawn to us. If they are looking at us they are not looking at the horse, so we have not done our job properly. Hopefully after a few minutes the audience will not be looking at the puppeteers much at all

- the eyes of the puppets. People often think they can see them blink! (They are made with such special care that they look incredibly real on stage)
- do you think the horses are reacting in an appropriate manner to the people in the scene around them – especially in big group scenes? The horses should always be reacting to what is going on THAT night, so not everything is choreographed in fine detail. The horse has license to decide how he reacts to different members in the village each night.

How do the other actors relate to the puppets?

A few ground rules are set up and taught to all actors in the beginning – first about horse psychology and then on puppet technique. If you look at a horse, face on, you are saying you are powerful. You are exerting authority, and you may be seen as a threat. Showing your back or standing at an angle to the horse will put it at ease and, in some cases, the horse will take it as an invitation to 'join up' and will come closer to you. This is a way to gain trust.

Once the actors know the simple rules they can decide how good they think their character is with horses. This is played out very simply between Albert and Baby Joey at the beginning of the play. Albert tries to feed Joey but is making a noise with the bucket and is also standing face on to him, staring straight at him. Though he is offering food he is being scary and domineering at the same time, which is confusing and difficult for Baby Joey.

All of the actors are reminded in rehearsals (and all through their involvement in *War Horse*) that they cannot physically

Sarah Mardel (right) as Joey Heart
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

Cast interview: Sarah Mardel

treat the puppets like real horses. They must not smack them on the rump because it will sound like someone hitting cane (and will most likely hurt their hand quite a bit!), and therefore ruin the illusion of the horse. They must not pull on the reins, because the 'Head' puppeteer has a hard job already, holding a very heavy puppet mostly above shoulder height, and will not appreciate having to pull against the actor too. They will simply not be as strong as a real horse. Both the puppeteer and the actor need to work together to create the illusion of a very strong and powerful animal, even though it is just a cane, metal and mesh being.

The people riding the horses are also taught how to hold their weight responsibly when they are mounted on the horse and to not move around once they are on top: the slightest movement from the rider can throw the puppeteers off balance and result in serious injury because they are strapped in to the horse.

When working with the puppets you also need to allow 'extra beats' in some actions in the story: a puppet held together by three people can never move as fast as a real horse, nor as fast as a single person without a puppet. Some moments are choreographed to ensure all puppeteers have time to see the actor, make a decision to move and then move all together. If the puppeteers can't see what is going on then the horse will not react. It will be no good having an actor jumping and waving behind Joey because the puppeteers can't see him, and so the horse will continue to graze even though the audience see the scary human jumping around not far away. And then, obviously, the illusion of a real horse is shattered.

Who does what within the horse? How do they work together as a team?

The 'Head' puppeteers operate the ears with their fingers, creates the eating motion and movement in the neck, and are in control of conveying the thoughts of the horse to the audience. Eye-line is very important.

The 'Heart' puppeteers operate the two front legs. They are not physically attached to the horse in any way and the cage of the horse's body simply rests on their wrists. They control the breathing by moving their wrists up and down, and also create the walking, trotting and galloping motions.

The 'Hind' puppeteers operate the two back legs and the tail. They will be helping to complete the walk, trot and gallop motion, and will also be conscious of the angles of the horse and sight-lines for the audience. The back legs are simply hooked under the cage so to move the tail the puppeteer must be sure the puppet is secure and the

'Heart' will not suddenly decide to move – otherwise the legs will fall from under the cage(!)

The Heart and Hind puppeteers need to think about how to add the illusion of muscle and weight to the horse in their movements.

Team work is all about peripheral vision: being aware of where the other puppeteers are, and what they are doing. Breathing together at times helps so you are all 'in tune' and the puppet is more likely to move together. The team need to be considerate of each other and aware of what is difficult and uncomfortable for each person. Then you can help when it's physically possible to do so.

We also talk a lot about how we are finding things, what we want to improve on, what we find difficult, what we are enjoying, what we would like to change and what the other puppeteers are doing that might affect each of us doing our job.

How can we practise puppetry in school? (give sample exercises)

I didn't have formal puppet training so I only know exercises that are *War Horse*-related. But I do know you can puppeteer ANYTHING... So, pick up an object, get to know it: the weight, how it feels in your hand, the texture, the contours. How might it move? How might it breathe? What sort of sound would it make? If it meets the other objects in the room, how does it relate to them and interact? Your focus should always be on your puppet.

Cast interview: Al Nedjari

Al Nedjari has designed and run workshops on puppetry for groups seeing *War Horse* in London and abroad. These workshops are available to book at the New London Theatre on matinee days. Visit warhorselondon.com for further information.



Parts played, and when: I performed in the show when it was last at the National Theatre and for its first six months in the West End. I played the heart of Joey and Topthorn, the Goose, Geordie and Thomas Bone.

How much research into real-life horses' behaviour did the puppeteers do in rehearsal?

If anyone has had drama school training, they'll have had the experience of 'animal study', which is often used as a precursor to character study. Alongside our puppetry skills training, *War Horse* rehearsals included very in-depth animal study and this required a lot of research. Some of this research was organised and some of it was informal.

The two most illuminating bits of research involved visiting The King's Troop, part of the Royal Horse Artillery. We stayed overnight and got up at the crack of dawn to clear out the stables. We then joined the troop as they did exercises at Wormwood Scrubs. We even had a chance to ride the horses as they pulled ceremonial guns. It was an incredible insight into the behaviour of military trained horses and the personnel around them.

Al Nedjari (right) with Pieter Lawman in the 2008 rehearsals for *War Horse*
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

The other research opportunity that made an enormous impact was the visit of Monty Roberts. He is the horse trainer, upon whom the film *The Horse Whisperer* is based. He spent a day with us and effectively 'trained' the puppet horses. Again, it was an incredible insight into the nuances of horse behaviour from somebody who has spent their entire life interacting with them.

In addition to the organised research opportunities, there was a huge amount of informal research that went on. Members of the team regularly offered YouTube clips, pictures and films they had discovered, to illustrate a particular bit of horse behaviour that we would add to our growing cache of possibilities on which to draw.

When we see the show, what should we look out for in the puppets or puppeteers?

For me, the life of the puppets is the most amazing thing about *War Horse*. And so, I'd observe very closely how the puppets are brought to life. The puppets themselves, though beautifully designed, are of course inanimate objects until manipulated by the puppeteers.

Notice the effect that breathing has, both as a means of bringing the creatures to life and manifesting their emotional state, and as a means of communication between the puppeteers themselves.

Notice also the use of stillness within the puppets. We imagine that the puppets look life-like because their movements are accurate. But it's stillness that invites an audience to become absorbed into the creature's inner world.

How do the other actors relate to the puppets?

The actors are affected by the puppets in exactly the same way that the audience is. Like an audience, the actors forget that puppeteers are present and see a real horse with its own personality. The biggest issue for an actor is determining how their particular character might deal with the creatures, given his/her experience and expertise at handling them.

Who does what within the horse? How do they work together as a team?

A very complex relationship exists between the three puppeteers in a single horse team. And the nature of this relationship is unique to each team.

By the time the team of which I was part had performed perhaps 100 times, we had established a very highly developed understanding of each other and a means of unspoken communication. Only at that stage were we able to react truly spontaneously to stimuli as if part of a single entity.

Cast interview: Al Nedjari

It's difficult to describe precisely how this communication works. It certainly wasn't a case of a single puppeteer leading, with the other two following. Leadership would often change depending on the nature of the stimulus. And often it would feel as though there was no leader at all.

This certainly involved us breathing on behalf of the creature, as a means of binding us to the emotional state of the horse and, in doing so, binding our emotional states as operators.

Over time one begins to recognise the tiniest of signals from one's fellow puppeteers; how, for example, a change in their breath often coincides with an impulse to do a certain thing; or how a slight change in their body position often occurs before they move in a certain way. A very rich network of these (often unconscious) sensitivities meant that it was possible to behave in a spontaneous but cohesive way.

How did the actors begin rehearsing? With the puppets in the room from the beginning?

It's impossible for the actors to be in relationship with invisible horses! So the puppet horses needed to be present from the beginning of rehearsals. Before this therefore the puppeteers had a fortnight with the directors of Handspring dedicated to mastering the basics of horse operation.



Cast interview: Curtis Jordan

Parts played, and when: Puppeteer Tophthorn and Joey's Head and the Goose, in 2011.

How much research into real-life horses' behaviour did the puppeteers do in rehearsal?

Research takes place constantly through rehearsals and even during performance. We spent a lot of time watching video footage of horses and their movements, reading about horse anatomy and psychology and spending as much time as possible watching real horses at stables and riding schools. We organise trips to military stables



whenever a new group of puppeteers start learning the show so we can see the differences between those horses that are used for riding, working and ones that serve in the military.

When we see the show, what should we look out for in the puppets or puppeteers?

The idea is that eventually the puppeteers, who are visible throughout the performance, will become 'invisible' to the audience because they will start to believe that the characters are real. But generally people flit between watching the puppets as real horses and watching the intricate work of the puppeteers. You should be able to see all three people controlling the sections of the horse, working together without communicating verbally. Each performance is an evolving improvisation between all three people as well as any character that is in the scene with the horse. Our challenge is to make the audience believe the horses are thinking and breathing as in life.

How do the other actors relate to the puppets?

We tend to call any actor that plays a scene with one of the horses, the "fourth puppeteer" as it falls to them to help make the audience believe it's a real horse. They will be responsible for making the weight, power and potential

danger of the horses seem real. They will also need to help create the relationships and emotional journeys between the two characters. As our horses don't talk or narrate the story, the humans in the show provide a lot of the communication between audience and puppets.

Who does what within the horse? How do they work together as a team?

Each horse has three puppeteers that operate either the Hind legs, the Heart and front legs, or the Head and we refer to each person as Head, Heart or Hind. The Heart puppeteer is responsible for providing the breath and emotional centre of the puppet, the Hind indicates emotion through the tail and legs and the Head puppeteer provides the thoughts of the puppet. All three need to work together to make sure the animal is always alive and this means leaving space for each other to contribute to the performance. We work in teams so we get to know how each other thinks and we spend a lot of time improvising in the puppet so we learn to anticipate each other's performance.

How can we practise puppetry in school?

One of the hardest things to master is giving life to an inanimate object. You can try practising with any object and seeing if you can make it 'breathe' and look around the room. Then try a couple of objects interacting with each other and create a scene. Then maybe try using a bigger object or puppet made from some brown paper for example that takes three people to manipulate. The task then will be to operate your specific part of the puppet whilst improvising with two other people.

How did the actors begin rehearsing? With the puppets in the room from the beginning?

Every actor in *War Horse* starts learning puppetry as I suggested above, using small objects and bringing them to life. We then progress to larger bunraku-style puppets before then spending most of our time perfecting the technique of the horse puppets. We then spend time improvising as a threesome out of the puppet. We film ourselves and rely on the directors and each other to feedback on the results of our rehearsal. The best thing about this show though is that the performance is never complete. We are always learning how to make the puppets more believable and exciting.

Curtis Jordan
PHOTO: BRANDON BISHOP

The First World War

An estimated ten million people died in World War I – a global military conflict which took place mainly in Europe between 1914 and 1918.

Militarily the war in the west began on 4 August 1914, when German troops swept into Luxembourg and Belgium.

The United Kingdom, France, Russia, and later Italy (from 1915) and the United States (from 1917), headed the Entente Powers, which defeated the Central Powers, led by the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman Empires. After its revolution in 1917, Russia withdrew from the war.

The Western Front, stretching 440 miles, from the Swiss border to the North Sea, was a line of trenches, dug-outs and barbed-wire fences, with an area known as ‘no man’s land’ between them. The line moved very little between 1914 and 1918.

On the Eastern Front, the vast eastern plains and limited rail network prevented a trench warfare stalemate, though the scale of the conflict was just as large as on the Western Front. The Middle Eastern Front and the Italian Front also saw heavy fighting, while hostilities also occurred at sea and, for the first time, in the air.

World War I caused the disintegration of four empires: the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian. Germany lost its colonial empire and states such as Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Yugoslavia gained independence.

The immense cost of waging the war also set the stage for the breakup of the British Empire and left France devastated for over 25 years.



Wounded men of the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers are tended to in a trench, 1916.
PHOTO (BY ERNEST BROOKS) © IWM Q739

France in World War I

by Nick Stafford

As part of my work on the stage play of *War Horse* I investigated the invasion and occupation of (part of) France in 1914, because a significant proportion of the story takes place in and around an occupied farm. However, I did this as a fiction writer, not a historian. My interest in history whilst writing a play like *War Horse* is as the backdrop. It is also undergrowth to snuffle around in, where I hope to glimpse how life was lived.

So I read about the occupation, imagined it, then, in anticipation of the questions the rest of the team would ask when we came to stand, say, the French characters of Paulette and Emilie on their feet, rather than give pages of documents or a talk, I wrote these monologues, and supplied figures that tell their own story.

PAULETTE: There were lots of rumours about what Germany was up to. Travellers came through and said that they'd entered Belgium. They'd done this because our own border with them was defended. To come through Belgium was to outflank our defences. No-one knew what to do. The trains that ran the line ten kilometres away were becoming less frequent, someone said. Jean and I tried to go into the village more often but hard news was impossible to get. One or two villagers said they weren't taking any chances – they took their portable possessions and went further into France. You can't move a farm like that though, can you? We talked about sending Emilie somewhere but with whom, to whom? She can't go alone. And then what if the Germans did come, would we ever see Emilie again? We cleared out the cellar and equipped it with food and water and candles and bedding. We disguised its entrance.

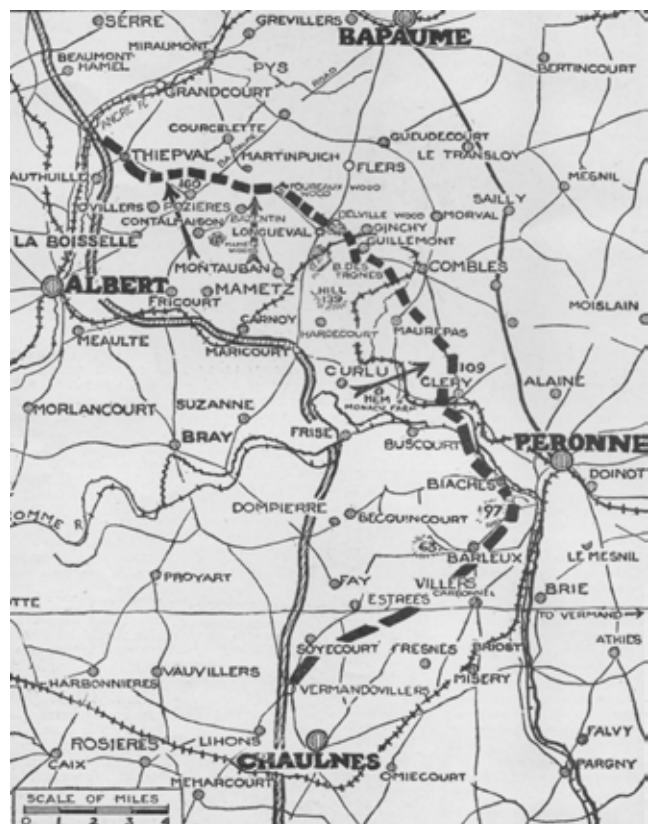
Then one day we saw three German soldiers on horses. They were up on the hill with spy glasses, then they went away. Jean took our best horse and went to find out what was happening. In our last hurried conversation he said he didn't know what he should do – like all men he'd done his National Service so he knew how to be a soldier. Perhaps that's where he went.

The Germans came and occupied us. They took over the administration and we all have new papers that we must carry at all times. They took an exhaustive inventory of everything – animals, crops, curtains, bowls, cutlery, books, furniture – everything. Sometimes they come around and ask where such and such a thing has gone and we have to be able to account for it or face gaol. We are not allowed out after dark, and we can't gather in groups of more than three. To travel to the next village we

must obtain a passport. Soldiers requisition whatever they need - horses, of course, also cows, pigs, potatoes, cotton sheets, ornaments, men. Any French men must work in their labour camps here, in Belgium, and in Germany. Everything is directed towards Germany's benefit. The churches hold Protestant services for them. Someone was caught with a telegraph terminal. They were tried and shot. There are rumours of French and British soldiers who were caught behind the German advance living in woods and in people's cupboards. What was once our land is now a gaol. We can hear the guns. They say we are part of Germany, now.

EMILIE: Papa and mama frowned and did a lot of whispering. We made a den in the cellar. Papa rode off and strange men came. I didn't understand them. They have many, many guns, swords, horses. There are lots of these men. Mama tells me to be very, very careful around them. She cries in the night. I still go to school, but monsieur Didot isn't our teacher any more, it's a woman called Madame Thiery. We're all hungry, all the time. We still grow food, but the men take it. Mama's hidden some potatoes and apples, but I'm not supposed to tell. She says the men will go away again. I ask when?

This article appeared in the original programme for *War Horse*.



Area of France invaded and devastated – 10%.

Livestock numbers in that area

	Pre-war 1918	
Cattle and draft oxen	892,000	58,000
Horses and mules	407,000	32,000
Sheep and goats	949,000	25,000
Pigs	356,000	25,000

Agricultural production lost in that area

Wheat	50%
Oats	30%
Sugar Beet	60%
Potatoes	18%

Damage in that area

Houses destroyed	293,039
Houses seriously damaged	435,961
Trenches and shell holes to be filled	436m cubic yards
Barbed wire to be removed	448m yards
Munitions to be destroyed	21m tons
Wells to be restored	121,108
Railway track destroyed	1,500 miles
Roads to be remade	33,000 miles

One million horses were taken to France from Britain.
62,000 were brought back.



The Horse Goes to War

by Robert Butler



One of the most widely-reproduced illustrations to have come out of the First World War shows a man kneeling in the middle of a road, cradling the head of a wounded horse. Behind him, smoke billows from a shelled house, and a compatriot (further up the road) urges him to move on quickly. The soldier's cheek is pressed against the horse's. The caption reads: 'Goodbye Old Man' [see next page]. It's melodramatic, of course; but the harsh fact is that more than eight million horses died during the First World War.

Most people had expected the war to be a short-term affair (over by Christmas, in fact). The classic theory of war, outlined by Clausewitz, was to seize the initiative. What followed would be short and decisive. The qualities needed in these kinds of engagements – surprise, speed, precision and ruthlessness – were best exemplified by the cavalry. The Cavalry Manual was unequivocal on the matter. Nothing could replace 'the speed of the horse, the magnetism of the charge, and the terror of cold steel.'

The cavalry placed great value on training and experience because horses don't like blood, or noise, or gunshots (they don't like anything unexpected really) and in a cavalry charge, a horse that panics can be more dangerous than the enemy. In the 19th century, the level of training reached impressive heights. Officers in the Prussian cavalry could charge 2000 yards without breaking line. Off-duty, a Prussian officer's idea of fun was to ride his horse between the turning sails of a windmill.

As for experience, English cavalry officers were renowned for riding fast over uncertain ground. This was largely thanks to the amount of time they had spent hunting foxes. 'In the business of war', wrote Captain Nolan, who died in the Charge of the Light Brigade, 'Our cavalry ought to be able to do whatever is done in the sport of hunting.'

In his book *Cavalry – Its History and Tactics* (1853), Captain Nolan writes that the first principle of horsemanship is to think of the horse first. A bad rider tries to guide and manage his horse so that he can 'keep his seat'. A good rider 'keeps his seat' in order to guide and manage his horse. This advice echoes the words of the Greek soldier and writer, Xenophon, two thousand years earlier. In his own treatise, *On Horsemanship*, Xenophon urged the cavalry to treat their horses gently. 'Those who force horses forward with blows,' he wrote, 'inspire them with still more terror.'

On the Western Front, the cavalry was stopped in its tracks by two 'terrors' that had been around for decades. The first was patented by an American farmer, Joseph Glidden, in 1874. He had discovered that if you placed barbs at intervals along a wire and used a second wire to hold these barbs in place, you could prevent cattle from roaming around the countryside. The discovery of 'bobbed' wire, or barbed wire, made Glidden one of the richest men in America, and transformed the American West.

The second 'terror' came from another American, who

Tophorn and Joey
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

The Horse Goes to War

had previously distinguished himself by inventing the mousetrap. Sir Hiram Maxim later became British and was knighted. His breakthrough was based on Newton's Third Law of Physics, the law of reciprocal actions. It states that 'whenever a particle A exerts a force on another particle B, B simultaneously exerts a force on A with the same magnitude in the opposite direction.' Maxim used the backward momentum, or recoil, that comes from firing a shot, to load the next bullet. This transformed the weapon's rate of fire. In 1881 Sir Hiram invented the automatic machine gun.

Hundreds of thousands of cattle in America may have known about barbed wire, but at the beginning of the First World War, the British army was still using single strands of wire. Machine guns had been used in the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5), causing one future British general to report that the only thing the cavalry could do in the face of machine guns was cook rice for the infantry. (His superiors thought he had lost his

mind.) Between 1904 and 1914, when war broke out, the number of machine guns the British army ordered each year from the arms manufacturer Vickers remained the same: ten. As one historian observed, the British army in the 19th century was 'a social institution prepared for any emergency except that of war.'

Barbed wire and machine guns overturned the traditional concepts of warfare (quick and decisive actions) and introduced (on an unheard-of scale) the war of attrition. The area under hostile fire, or 'swept zone', became known as No Man's Land. The trenches were rapidly constructed out of duckboards, sandbags and corrugated iron and this trench system became so fixed that you could buy maps of the Western Front from London stationers.

The most famous battle of the war, the Battle of the Somme, was remarkable (not least) for its total lack of surprise. One survivor from the Somme remembered as his strongest recollection 'all those grand-looking cavalymen, ready mounted to follow the breakthrough. What a hope!'

Two and a half months after the Somme, a new weapon emerged. It was mobile, it could deflect machine gun bullets and it could crush barbed wire. The horse had been replaced by the tank.

© Robert Butler, September 2007

This article appeared in the original programme for *War Horse*. Robert Butler's publications include *The Alchemist Exposed*, *The Art of Darkness* and *Humble Beginnings* in the series 'The National Theatre at Work', copies of which are on sale at the NT Bookshop



Goodbye Old Man,
a poster produced by the Blue Cross
©THE MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

Horse and the history of war

by Gene Tempest



There is a lot of history in the *War Horse* story. We discover pre-war rural England – a small, complicated community, one family’s hardship, farm chores, livestock auctions, and horse-power. We witness the impact of the First World War on the countries and peoples that waged it – destruction of land and animals: trenches dug deep into the rich farmland of the French north, bombed-out houses and exhausted, starving equines; destruction of peoples: occupied populations, men on both sides of the front struggling to survive, dead husbands and sons, and the families and friends left to mourn them.

The original novel by Michael Morpurgo and the adaptation by the National Theatre were meticulously researched – as both final products and several of the articles in this education pack make clear – so it comes as no surprise that the cavalry bugle rings loud, sharp and historically correct. But in my opinion, the most interesting and, perhaps unexpectedly, the most historically representative part of *War Horse* is the central story: the friendship between men and horses in war.

Over the course of the war, the French and British armies deployed some 4 million horses and mules, the vast majority on the Western Front. Recognising the scale of this animal presence leads to drastically recasting our understanding of the Great War. Through horses – and particularly via the relationships between soldiers and horses – we may come to see entire societies, events, and individuals’ experiences anew.

When we dig into British, Australian, French, German and American archives, memoirs, letters, photographs and sketches, we begin to see how important horses really were – not only to military authorities (who often echo the sentiment that “[Horses] were not only

valuable; they were indispensable. [...] had the Allies been deprived of them, the victory would not have been ours”), but also vitally to the soldiers themselves.

Some men enlisted to follow their horses to war, as Albert does in *War Horse*. This was the case for a young soldier, Paddy, in the British Expeditionary Force. Paddy was thus able to remain with the horse he loved; the pair became groom and mount to an artillery officer on the Western Front.

Others men simply expressed a general desire for equine companionship during the trials of war. Frenchman Ephraïm Grenadou, born in a small hamlet in the rural region of Eure-et-Loire, enlisted with the simple request, “I want to be a soldier with the horses” (“Je veux être soldat dans les chevaux”).

Nor was Morpurgo’s story the first time a writer described a young man following his horse (and heart) to war. Fairfax Downey’s *War Horse* (1942) tells of the Texan, Jim Thomas, who joins the army to be with a mare named Barbara. Something about the idea of a loving partnership between soldier and horse captured the imagination of societies during the First World War – and still does today.

Unlikely as it may seem given the number of horses and men at war, reunions did sometimes occur. Richard St Barbe Baker remembers being reunited with a horse he had worked with in Canada prior to the war: “Recognition was mutual and it would be hard to say which of us was more excited. In a few minutes he was showing off with all the paces I had taught him during our long rides across the prairies of Saskatchewan.”

Another witness remembers Colonel W. MacDermott returning to his unit after an injury had forced his temporary evacuation: “The Colonel was anxious to see [his horse] Billy again, and started to walk down the line, shouting ‘Billy.’ The result was surprising; the horse recognized the voice, and immediately began to neigh, and shortly after exhibited great joy at seeing his old master again.”

Thus many of the most romantic parts of the *War Horse* story find ample archival confirmation, but for me the significance is not just about historical fact-checking. Instead, I think that the great beauty of the play is that it conveys a deep – and accurate – truth about the nature of war: horses helped soldiers remain human, and human/equine relationships help us understand how humane sentiments survived the trenches.

Sir John Moore, Director of the British veterinary services in France during the war, believed that soldiers’ relationships to horses provided “evidence of a pleasanter side of the picture and one which acts as a corrective and is an antithesis to baser impulses of men and nations.”

Scholars who study how war transforms soldiers often

Hayes Wills and his Field Artillery horse in Arizona, 1917. Inscription on the back of the image: “my horse/I ride him all/the time/drill on horses/all the time.”

IMAGE COURTESY OF BOB SWANSON

Horse and the history of war



write about brutalisation – how participating in and witnessing violence makes men increasingly callous and unemotional. But soldiers' relationships to horses, as we see in the play, suggest that in fact there is a more delicate balance between brutalization and sensitivity.

"Among the few bright things of the soldier's life none touched him more deeply than the mutual attachment of man and horse. No one who has ever had to do with soldiers and with horses can fail to acknowledge how much the horse helped to keep up the morale of the man. The very work of tending a horse was a distraction which relieved the trooper or the gunner from the otherwise unrelenting tension of warfare. The few minutes of pleasant companionship made him the more ready for the battle of a new day." – AW Curie, "Foreword" in DS Tablyn, *The Horse in War and Famous Canadian War Horses* (1932)

Writing about horses also provided soldiers with a way of protesting against war. First World War veteran Erich Maria Remarque, in the German classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*, wrote that "it is the vilest baseness to use horses in the war." Briton Robert Graves, in his war memoir *Good-Bye to All That*, echoes this sentiment: "The number of dead horses and mules shocked me; human corpses were all very well, but it seemed wrong for animals to be dragged into the war like this."

Mobilisation

The requisition of horses in the French and British countryside and cities was often a painful moment,

one which accompanied the traumatic enlistment and departure of the menfolk. A French postcard shows a woman screaming at the military officer sent to buy her horse; the caption reads: "Keep my man at war for as long as you'd like, but at least let me keep my mare!!!"

French and British citizens wrote to their local and national governments with professional and personal appeals to keep their animals. Two children wrote to Lord Kitchener in August 1914:

"We are writing for our pony, which we are very afraid may be taken for your army. Please spare her. [...] It would break our hearts to let her go. We have given 2 others and 3 of our family are now fighting for you in the Navy. Mother and all will do anything for you but please let us keep old Betty, and send official word quickly before anyone comes." (For more on this particular example, see Jilly Cooper, *Animals in War*)

Over the course of the war, the United Kingdom impressed 468,088 privately owned horses into the army – 17% of Britain's equine population. In France in the month of August 1914 alone, 730,000 horses were requisitioned – in other words, 23% of the French horse population disappeared from the home front in fewer than 30 days.

The military archives are full of telegrams regarding the dangerous depletion of the French horse population. In early October 1914, the Prefect of the Aube telegraphed the Minister of War to beg him to stop the requisitions in the region – otherwise the Prefect feared that agricultural work would become completely impossible.

In Britain, a general shortage of the required light-draught horses was worsened by the fact that politics dictated requisitions: though Ireland had provided 80% of England's army horses before the war, military authorities decided that it was too controversial to widely requisition Irish equines upon mobilization. Called in to testify before the Committee of the Supply of Horses for the Army, WH Birkbeck, the Director of Remounts, stated only that requisitioning horses in Ireland was not desirable "for reasons of State."

Imports

To meet demands for equine reinforcements after catastrophic casualty rates early in the war, hundreds of thousands of animals were purchased in the United States and Canada, as well as tens of thousands in Argentina. The fact that Germany did not have access to these markets, nor to the fodder exports of the Americas, gave the Allied campaign a material – and potentially decisive – advantage.

The photographer Erwin Biesenbach and his horse on the Eastern Front. IMAGE COURTESY OF JENS-OLAF WALTER

Horse and the history of war

American newspapers widely reported the arrival of French and British purchasing officers. On November 2, 1914, *The Los Angeles Times* ran the sensationalist headline, “Beware! California Invaded By War Horse Agents.” Meanwhile, American horse dealers made handsome profits: “Alabama farmers profit by demand for war horses,” reported *The Washington Post* (horses were purchased at an average price between \$200 and \$300 a head). Meanwhile, other Americans protested against the involvement of the nation’s horses in a European war. As one 1915 *Washington Post* editorial put it, “The American horse has about as much business in the conflict as the American citizen.”

Charles Monpert was a French remount officer in the United States in 1914-1915. He drove a Ford across the country, eating fried chicken and corn for the first time, inspecting horses for 12 to 17 hours a day. In the duplicitous game of livestock purchase, Monpert was up against the likes of Joe Christie, a rough-rider from Grand Island, Nebraska, who bragged that he could sell any horse – no matter how wild:

“A lot of unbroken broncos were being shipped into the company to sell. [...] We could ride anything we could climb on to [...] It was not only a matter of personal pride with us to be able to control a horse well enough for it to pass inspection, but we also welcomed the nice fat tips the owners gave us when we rode one of their poor horses so well that it passed inspection.” – Joe Christie, *Seventy-Five Years in the Saddle* (1976)

After the War

Though in 1917 Britain had more than 1 million horses in all its theatres, only some 60,000 returned to the United Kingdom after the war. Most were sold to local populations as working horses, while the animals in the worst condition were auctioned off to slaughterhouses

Many years after the war, soldiers still deeply regretted the horses they had left behind:

“Poor dear old Dandy, many were the rides we had together. [...] I wish I could pull down your soft face towards mine once again, and talk of the times you took me down Hill 63 and along Hyde Park Corner at Ploegsteert. Had I not been wounded and sent back to England at the end of the war, I would have brought you home with me to show my family, a friend that not merely uncomplainingly but cheerfully, with prancing feet and arching neck and well-groomed skin, bore me safely through dangers and darkness, on crowded roads and untracked fields. [...] I used to tell the men that Dandy and I always came home together. Sometimes I was on his back and sometimes he was on mine, but we always came home together.” – FG Scott, “Epitaph”

© Gene Tempest, 2011

Gene Tempest is finishing her PhD, *The Long Face of War: Horses in the French and British Armies on the Western Front*, at Yale University. She is a specialist on the cultural and environmental histories of war and violence. gene.tempest@yale.edu

Hints on horses

From Matthew Beaumont Parrington estate manager and farmer, to his son who was going to war. Parrington was co-director Tom Morris' great-grandfather.

**Ashprington,
Totnes, Devon**

September 29, 1914

...Now for hints on horses although I do hope you won't have to go after all. The war must change in its nature entirely before long. It can't possibly last as it is and where it is...

When campaigning, there are lots of little things you can do with horses which may save you a lot of trouble and a lot of danger. First about food: you will have that all in your instructions I suppose, but for an ordinary horse doing ordinary work, 15lbs good oats and about 10lbs – 12lbs of clean hay or other bulky food per day. Also when you get a chance give a few beetroot or other roots cut up in their corn. Carrots are the best. A horse should be fed three times a day but you must feed when you can, water as often as possible but never just before fast work. When you off saddle at night let them drink as much as they like before food when they come in tired.

Never sit in the saddle when you are not wanted there, always dismount. And if you come to a very stiff climb always get off and lead your horse if you can or if you may. You will be surprised what these little considerations do for a horse. And you must remember that mounted troops are only useful so long as their horses are fit and well.

After a long journey, never take off the saddle until his back has cooled (this applies to collars and harness too) down. Slacken the girth and lift the saddle a little and put it back again until the back is cool. Then unsaddle and put on cloth. Then a very good plan is to go round in the evening when horses are picketed and feel their ears. If they are cold and damp they must be dried. Rub till they are dry with your hands if you have no cloth. Horses which have been a little overdone will often go wrong in the night if care is not taken in this way.

Then lumps and bumps. Never mind if it's a bruise or a sprain, bathe it immediately you stop work for the day with a sponge and fresh supplies of hot water till the place feels quite cooked through, then put a bandage (not tight) round it to keep away the cold. If there is no hot water, get a linen bandage or several and wrap them loosely round the

places after thoroughly wetting them in cold water, and mind they keep wet all night. In the morning if he must work or not, put the wet bandages on before starting and leave them on all day, but of course they must be tight enough to keep from slipping.

If you can, always take hoods with you for putting on the horses at night after their heads and ears have been well dried. No one knows the great benefit this is. Never put a damp rug on a horse. If he is very hot when he has finished work and a cold wind blowing, put a thick pad of hay or straw or dry litter on his loins, then throw a rug loosely over it. This will enable a horse to dry without getting cold, also without wetting his cloth through with steam. Horses out of condition, especially young ones, you will have a lot of trouble with in this way as, after hard work, they keep breaking out into fresh sweats and will soon start shivering, when inflammation may set in at any moment. A third of a pint of whisky with twice or three times the quantity of water poured down his throat will often do wonders for a tired working horse and bring him to his feed, and it can never do any harm.

DRAWINGS BY RAE SMITH



War Horse

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

written by Lynn Sear, literacy consultant

Text/genre

This 3-week unit of work relates to the story *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo and the play by the National Theatre. Drama techniques such as 'role on the wall', 'hot seating', 'conscience alley' and 'still images' are used to stimulate ideas and create situations. Visual images and music are also incorporated. Specific teaching strategies are highlighted in bold and there is a glossary to explain how each of these works in a classroom situation. This unit of work would be most appropriate if used in a Year 6 class.

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

Learning Objectives and Pupils Success criteria	Whole-class work engaging starting points	Whole-class work Modelled/shared	Independent work	Plenary work	Evaluation/ assessment notes
<p>SESSION 1</p> <p>To discuss possibilities and predict outcomes using text</p> <p><i>I can make predictions from text</i></p>	<p>Activating response to the text using Book Talk. Teacher to read aloud the author's note at the front of the book. Children to use paired talk to share likes/dislikes/puzzles/questions and to jot these down on a sticky note. Teacher to collate the responses, drawing on similarities between them. Display on a grid.</p> <p>Additional questions to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you read a book by Michael Morpurgo before? • If so, what kinds of books does he generally write? • Genre? • What clues are in the blurb? 	<p>Shared Reading of first chapter up to 'but you'll be eating out of my hand quick as a tick'. What kind of a place is this? How do we know? What are the feelings? Why is Joey so scared? Highlight words in the passage that indicate how Joey is feeling (confusion, terror, terrible, wild, desperate, struggled). Put the words up on your working wall on a vocabulary bank. Compare the written text with the depiction of 'Auction Day – 5 August 1912' in the play. This is a Key Scene to watch in the play.</p> <p>Focus on the theme of 'fate' and the relationship between the Narracott brothers. Recall the scene and compare to the description in book, then add to the list of words taken directly from text using a Zone of Relevance to activate dormant vocabulary identifying an atmosphere of fear. Suggested words: <i>menacing, horrifying, frightening, uncomfortable</i>.</p>	<p>Independent writing</p> <p>Using the talk, ask the children to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What war do you think this is about? • Why would there be such a painting (of the horse mentioned in the author's note) and what could be its significance? <p>Ensure children are aware that 'significance' means importance. It would be useful to watch the play at this point, taking note of the key scenes to focus on within this unit of work.</p>	<p>Share responses and start collating work on a working wall specifically for the text and play.</p>	<p>Identify what children know of war and WW1; build this into a later session to ensure gaps in knowledge are addressed.</p>
<p>SESSION 2</p> <p>To draw upon a bank of words to accurately describe places and feelings</p> <p><i>I can choose relevant words and phrases</i></p>	<p>Shared Reading of first chapter up to 'but you'll be eating out of my hand quick as a tick'. What kind of a place is this? How do we know? What are the feelings? Why is Joey so scared? Highlight words in the passage that indicate how Joey is feeling (confusion, terror, terrible, wild, desperate, struggled). Put the words up on your working wall on a vocabulary bank. Compare the written text with the depiction of 'Auction Day – 5 August 1912' in the play. This is a Key Scene to watch in the play.</p> <p>Focus on the theme of 'fate' and the relationship between the Narracott brothers. Recall the scene and compare to the description in book, then add to the list of words taken directly from text using a Zone of Relevance to activate dormant vocabulary identifying an atmosphere of fear. Suggested words: <i>menacing, horrifying, frightening, uncomfortable</i>.</p>	<p>Role play. In groups of three, using information from text, construct the Narracott family, perhaps in the kitchen preparing a meal. What might the conversation be about, what might they be eating etc. Create a still image to portray the moment when the dad announces he has brought a horse home. (In the play Joey is already there) Use thought tracking to understand what each character is thinking at each moment in time.</p>	<p>Discuss characters in the book and what is known so far of them. Who is the most important character? Albert/Joey/ Mum / Dad or his brother (play version only). Who has power?</p>	<p>Discuss characters in the book and what is known so far of them. Who is the most important character? Albert/Joey/ Mum / Dad or his brother (play version only). Who has power?</p>	<p>Identify use of vocabulary – is it used appropriately and linked to context?</p>
<p>SESSION 3</p> <p>To write in role using a character's perspective</p> <p><i>I can use verbs to describe movement and adjectives to describe appearance</i></p>	<p>'Joey meeting Albert' is a Key Scene in the play. Children to recall and identify the way Albert moves around Joey and what his motive is to answer question 'How is trust built?' Focus on how Albert does not use eye contact and how he uses his body in a non-threatening manner.</p> <p>Visual images. Use pictures of horses to generate an adjective bank to describe the way they move, look, feel etc. Discuss word choices which show positives and negatives to maximum effect – use a language continuum – trot to canter. Identify which words have the best effect.</p>	<p>Modelled writing in role. Teacher to model writing a paragraph from the point of view of Albert meeting Joey for the first time. Focus on vocabulary. What words can we draw upon to describe the movement and feeling of horses at the auction? Children to write in role as Albert writing his diary for the first time. Focus on the use of language appropriate for the time. Use images on tables and language continuum from first session generated to convey these feelings.</p>	<p>Read rest of chapter 1 and focus on the theme of 'fate' and how Joey and Albert have been drawn together. Why do they need each other so much?</p> <p>Share vocabulary and place language continuum onto working wall.</p>	<p>Read rest of chapter 1 and focus on the theme of 'fate' and how Joey and Albert have been drawn together. Why do they need each other so much?</p> <p>Share vocabulary and place language continuum onto working wall.</p>	<p>Collect evidence on sentence structure – can children use first person consistently?</p>

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

Learning Objectives and Pupils Success criteria	Whole-class work engaging starting points	Whole-class work Modelled/shared	Independent work	Plenary work	Evaluation/ assessment notes
<p>SESSION 4</p> <p>To understand how to paragraph an argument</p> <p><i>I can organise sentences into sections</i></p>	<p>Shared Reading Read <i>War Horse</i> chapter 2 up to page 15, father's speech <i>'if that animal is not ploughing straight as an arrow inside a week, he'll be sold on'</i>. Explore what would happen either way. What should Albert do? Explore feelings – use corridor of conscience to present arguments and counter arguments with a child as Albert walking down it. Eg, 'if he doesn't plough your Dad will send him back'. 'He's a young thoroughbred – he's not meant to pull carts'.</p>	<p>Modelled writing</p> <p>Teacher to use connectives – eg 'on the other hand', 'however', 'despite the fact' – to organise information into paragraphs and to support presenting the arguments and counter arguments.</p>	<p>Independent writing Children to write a short passage of 2 paragraphs where they present a balanced argument for why it would be important for Albert to get Joey to plough the field and what would be the implications if he did not. Look at reasons associated with what it means to the family and for the long term if Joey helps them win the bet. Children to present their information to each other in pairs giving an argument and a counter argument. Each person to present a different paragraph.</p>	<p>In the play Mum says 'You've done well with him, proud of you son'</p> <p>Discuss the relationship between Albert and Mum – why can she say this and Dad can't?</p> <p>Read to end of Chapter 2.</p>	<p>Can children use however and although appropriately to counter information?</p>
<p>SESSION 5</p> <p>To infer information from the text (by identifying the arrival of war and its effect on family and community)</p> <p><i>I can read between the lines to gather evidence</i></p>	<p>Recap end of chapter 2 'it's War Mother.' Shared Reading chapters 3 and 4. Model completing a table of life before war arrived for the family and Joey and what life is like now. Reference specific characters and how life has changed them. Use both play and book.</p> <p>Ask children to mind map what they know of war already, and where possible, to identify anything factual about WW1. Work in pairs.</p>		<p>Questioning using 'Talk to the hand' Children to work in pairs again compiling a list of questions using who/what/why/when from the talk to the hand visual about what they would like to find out about World War 1 that they can then find out from the visit to the Imperial War Museum (IWM). Whilst doing this, children to have pictures on tables depicting parts of the War and to be listening to songs from WW1, 'Pack up your troubles in your old kitbag', 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary', 'Oh it's a Lovely War', 'Take me Back to Dear Old Blighty', 'The Rose of No Man's Land'.</p>	<p>Children to share questions and identify which are best to find out specific facts. Each child to have a clipboard to record 5 key questions that they will take to the IWM. What questions can be answered by using the text? Do we need more factual evidence?</p>	<p>Identify children who have inferred information from text – Reading Assessment Focus 3 – and question them on which parts of the text they have used.</p>
<p>SESSION 6</p> <p>To develop understanding of the causes, effects and resolution of war and conflict</p> <p><i>I can use sources and artefacts to answer questions</i></p>	<p>At this point try and make a visit to the Imperial War Museum. This is vital if children have not had the opportunity to look at WW1 in detail within the curriculum provision. It is important to clear up any misconceptions between WW1 and WW2 that may exist. Children to fact gather using the questions produced from yesterday.</p>		<p>Share facts on return – were there any questions unanswered? How can we research the answers? What counts as 'evidence'? What 'sources' did you look at? Look at map of Europe. Where is the story set? Mark on where trenches were and where you can imagine parts of the story taking place using the references from Captain Nicholls' sketch book in the play. Ask children to make notes of these when watching the play and discuss what role they play in scene setting and providing a narrative.</p> <p>Add information to working wall.</p>		<p>Who could use a source or artefact to answer a question, who just relied on text and being told?</p>

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

Learning Objectives & Pupils Success criteria	Whole-class work engaging starting points	Whole-class work Modelled/shared	Independent work	Plenary work	Evaluation/ assessment notes
<p>SESSION 7 To identify how an author and/ or director create atmosphere in a production</p> <p><i>I can understand how an author and or director builds tension and atmosphere</i></p>	<p>Start session with discussing the separation of Joey and Albert. (end of chapter 4) Why do you think that Albert's father treats Joey so badly? In play this takes place on 5 August 1914 (as stated by Captain Nicholls's sketches)</p> <p>Paired writing Ask children to write another entry in the diary of Albert in pairs, taking it in turns to write a sentence each. Focus on the emotions between Albert and Joey and Albert and his father.</p>		<p>Read chapters 5 and 6 to page 48 'and there was not a single man in the squadron who seemed prepared for it.' Focus on the Key Scene in the play of the Ferry crossing and recreate it partly using rope and 4 people standing inside a square held by the class. Children on outside to whisper words describing the atmosphere and activity. Draw upon vocabulary used in the Zones of Relevance activity from session 2.</p>		
<p>SESSION 8 To write an imaginary account using another perspective</p> <p><i>I can write emotively and descriptively</i></p>	<p>Read remainder of chapter 6 If you were reading the story from Captain Nicholls' point of view, what would be the differences in the description of the first battle? Put children into pairs and focus on the description in the text when they go into battle. One child then to be Captain Nicholls and they other to be a prompter. The child who is Captain Nicholls starts with a description, and the other child says 'Tell me more about.'</p>		<p>Use the retelling of going into battle to write an account entitled 'Captain's Nicholl's final words'. Ask children to write in their own words what happened that day from the first moment they were given the message to move forward. Comment on the feeling of panic and noise around them.</p>		<p>Can they use a range of vocabulary to describe the chaos and the emotions around them?</p>
<p>SESSION 9 To write a vivid descriptive passage drawing upon the 5 senses</p> <p><i>I can use my senses to make my writing come to life</i></p>	<p>Return to the text. Shared reading to Page 60 (chapter 7) Discuss the importance of letters to and from home in a world without email, mobile phones and television. How did news filter through? Albert and Joey are still separated. What would Albert write to Joey about life back home if he could? Teacher to model writing a letter with news back home</p> <p><i>Dear Joey, How are you my old friend? I am missing you more day by day. Mother is frantic with worry about the war, she is convinced that no-one will come back alive. Life has changed a little on the farm since you have left – Father rarely drinks anymore as we have so little money, he has to work all day for us to survive! Reports come back daily about deaths on the warfront – we have found out Captain Nicholls has died in battle, I wonder if you were with him at the time? Next week I am 16. Although I am not old enough, I am planning to sign up, and then I can come and find you! I believe we will be together again. Your best friend and master, Albert.</i></p>		<p>Read to page 63 'Do me proud, Joey, do me proud'. Independent writing – children to write a response in the voice of Joey to Albert, what has he seen / heard / felt? Ask children to plan using a sensory grid using page 62. Children to highlight the language used by Michael Morpurgo on page 62 where there is a heavily descriptive passage before just going into battle.</p>	<p>Children to read out their imaginary responses to Albert from Joey with class to peer assess and evaluate what sensory devices they have used.</p>	
<p>SESSION 10 To use commas and semi-colons to demarcate complex sentences</p> <p><i>I can use a comma or a semi-colon to extend my simple sentence</i></p>	<p>Ask the children to return to the facts from session 6. Show them how to make them into simple sentences, eg, 1) World War 1 started on 28 July 1914 2) Armistice was on 11 November 1918 3) The introduction of the tank happened in WW1 4) There were 19,240 dead on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.</p>	<p>Model writing complex sentences using the simple sentences. Highlight on IWB how to extend sentences using 'as' or 'as a result of this', and identify how to use a semi-colon. <i>As the war progressed, the fatalities increased; on the first day of the Battle of the Somme there were 19,240 deaths.</i></p>	<p>Children to write complex sentences in mixed ability pairs picking up two simple sentences from strips on the table and identifying how to join them through use of connective phrases on table and a comma and/or a semi-colon.</p> <p>Children to write their own non-chronological report on World War 1 using the complex sentences they had created. Children to work in groups with each member having responsibility for each sub-section.</p>	<p>Teacher to collate the facts with the complex sentences and display on the board. Play 'sentence doctor' – can these be improved upon? Children to identify layout – title, subtitles etc within their writing. Explain it is a non-chronological report.</p>	<p>Collect evidence for Writing Assessment Focus 6</p>

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

Learning Objectives and Pupils Success criteria	Whole-class work engaging starting points	Whole-class work Modelled/shared	Independent work	Plenary work	
<p>SESSION 11 To infer information about characters</p> <p><i>I can write a character description</i></p>	<p>Shared reading chapters 8, 9 and 10. Explore the theme of 'Friendship' at this point and stress the importance of acts of kindness during the war, where normally you would only believe that people are hostile to each other. Children to discuss 'what conditions make people want to fight one another, and how can we prevent it?' Children to discuss in circle, speaking in turn and using phrases, 'I agree with you but...' or 'as well as that I think...'. Encourage all to speak and take in turns.</p>	<p>Shared reading up to end of chapter 12. 'it was the mud that was killing us one by one, the mud, the lack of shelter and the lack of food'. If children have had the opportunity to visit the Imperial War Museum then they should have visited the trench. Discuss from the exhibition what life was like in the trenches. Show pictures and give facts about where they were situated and what purpose they had.</p>	<p>List the characters introduced in the text since Joey has been at war. Tophorn, Herr Hauptmann, Emilie etc. Ask the children to pick one and complete a role-on-the wall using an adjective bank to describe the characters. Children to then refer back to the text and pick out lines from the text which prove that word through action or speech. One side of the character collate information that we know about a character and on the other side information we can guess/infer using evidence from play or text.</p>	<p>What are similarities between the characters in Joey's life? What are the differences? Does nationality matter? Discuss - Why were Joey and Tophorn such a comfort to the wounded men? What can give you comfort in tough situations?</p>	<p>Identify what information was inferred (AF3 – Reading) without being explicitly written.</p>
<p>SESSION 12 To write in the first person and to use adjectives and powerful verbs</p> <p><i>I can write an account of life in the trench using descriptive vocabulary</i></p>	<p>Shared reading chapters 15 and 16 and focus on Key Scene from play – No Man's Land</p> <p>Use paired talk to discuss the questions in pairs – How did Joey feel when he was trapped in No Man's Land? When both the Welshman and the German were trying to help Joey, whom did you want to take the horse? Why? What did the event say about how the soldiers on both sides really felt about the war?</p>	<p>Independent writing Children to write an account of life in the trenches in the first person as Albert. What is he thinking? What could he describe – again, refer to sensory grid. Also focus on emotions and thoughts about home and Joey.</p>	<p>Independent writing Children to write an account of life in the trenches in the first person as Albert. What is he thinking? What could he describe – again, refer to sensory grid. Also focus on emotions and thoughts about home and Joey.</p>	<p>Read up to Chapter 14</p> <p>Children to share and peer assess using a great and 'even better if...'</p>	
<p>SESSION 13 To identify how an author uses description to depict how emotions change throughout a story</p> <p><i>I can identify different feelings and how they change according to events in the play or text</i></p>	<p>Shared reading chapters 17 and 18 and focus on Key Scene from play Joey and Albert reunited. In the play, Albert is blinded. What clues did he have to identify that Joey was near?</p> <p>Teacher to model writing the ending from Albert's perspective and when he first started to see and identify it was Joey.</p>	<p>Children to write the ending from Albert's perspective as told by the play rather than the book</p>	<p>Ask children to complete an emotions graph with a line running along an axis to represent the changing emotions of Joey throughout the story. Ask children to refer back to play (key scenes) and text, and alter line accordingly to how Joey is depicted to have felt. Use another colour to plot on Albert's story as told by the play.</p>	<p>Joey had relationships with several people in the book – Albert, Captain Nicholls, Warren, and Emilie. Joey was a confidante to these people. Why do you think that it was so easy for these people to talk to Joey so openly? In what way was this comforting to them?</p>	
<p>SESSION 14 To write an alternative ending using a different perspective</p> <p><i>I can change the perspective but keep the facts the same</i></p>	<p>Children to write the ending from Albert's perspective as told by the play rather than the book</p>	<p>Compare and contrast Joey's journey with the one that Albert might have made</p>	<p>Children to write the ending from Albert's perspective as told by the play rather than the book</p>	<p>Compare and contrast Joey's journey with the one that Albert might have made</p>	

Year 6 unit of work – Literacy (English National Curriculum)

Learning Objectives and Pupils Success criteria	Whole-class work engaging starting points	Whole-class work Modelled/ shared	Independent work	Plenary work	Evaluation/ assessment notes
<p>SESSION 15</p> <p>To write critically about a text identifying the author's style and summarising the story</p> <p><i>I can write a book review</i></p>			<p>Book review Children to write a book review on <i>War Horse</i>. Ensure children know how to write one, briefly summarising story (main plot and characters) whilst commenting on author's use of language rather than telling everything that happens. Questions to support writing the review –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the predictions made before reading the book correct? • Why do you think that Michael Morpurgo wrote the book from the horse's point of view? • Joey had relationships with several people in the book and play – Albert, Captain Nicholls, Warren, and Emilie. Joey was a confidante to these people. Why do you think that it was so easy for these people to talk to Joey so openly? In what way was this comforting to them? • Would you recommend it to others? If so, why? 	<p>Children to share what their favourite part of the book has been and why.</p>	
<p>Additional session</p>			<p>Play review</p>		

War Horse

Scheme of work for English at KS3

written by Louise Elstone and Sam Haseler,
Ellen Wilkinson School

Scheme of work for English at KS3

War Horse

This scheme of work is intended for use with students studying English at KS3. Teachers will need to refer to both:

War Horse, the play, by Nick Stafford,
(ISBN: 978-0-571-25015-9)

and *War Horse*, the novel, by Michael Morpurgo,
(ISBN: 0-7497-4850-8)

Both are available to buy from the NT Bookshop.

T: 020 7452 3456

E: bookshop@nationaltheatre.org.uk

W: nationaltheatre.org.uk/bookshop

In this scheme of work you will find five areas of exploration which can be delivered in any order, or independently, according to your preference.

They are as follows:

Synopses: of the novel and play

Inspirations: why do people write books/plays?

Songs of War: the music and poetry of WW1

Transformations: the adapting process, from page to stage

Dramatic Devices: (including puppetry)

Each area is divided into two sections:

EXPLORE and **ACTIVITIES**.

EXPLORE sections contain topics for discussion in class.

ACTIVITIES sections have suggestions for reading, writing, speaking & listening, as well as drama exercises.

At the end of the document there are suggestions for assessment tasks and for cross-curricular activities.

The scheme of work contains links to some materials that exist online and which can be printed off for use in the classroom. These can all be found in the section titled 'Resources'.

There are also some links to websites external to the National Theatre which are correct at the time of publication. The NT is not responsible for the content of any of these external websites.

Contents

The story

Synopsis of *War Horse* – the novel,
by Michael Morpurgo

Inspiration

Songs of war

Transformations – adapting a novel to the stage

Dramatic devices

Cross curricular section/other resources

Final assessment task 1

Rewrite the end of the novel as a playscript

Final assessment task 2

Rewrite the ending of the play in the style of a novel

Final assessment task 3

Write a review of *War Horse*

Resources

Letter from Tom Morris' Great-Grandfather

The Horse's Mouth by Mervyn Millar

Extract 1

Extract 2

Puppet and character work by first staff director, Polly Findlay

Rae Smith's drawings – the backdrop to the production

How lighting is used in *War Horse*

Adrian Kohler's drawings of his puppet designs

Mervyn Millar's photos of the puppet prototypes from *War Horse*

The story

Synopsis of *War Horse* the novel, by Michael Morpurgo:

Joey's earliest memories are of being sold off at auction to a drunk farmer called Ted Narracott, who bought him to spite one of his fellow farmers in the parish. Ted's young son Albert (aged 13) immediately takes a shine to the foal. When Albert asks his mother why Ted bought the horse – when the family are clearly struggling to keep up the mortgage repayments on the farm – his mother simply explains that “your father is not himself when he's like that”.

Nonetheless, Albert is overjoyed with this new addition to the farm. He makes it his life's work to train the horse up to be the strongest and most handsome in the village, and names him Joey. Joey is devoted to his new master and the two become inseparable. Joey also makes a new friend of the Narracotts' farm horse, Zoey.

One night, Albert's father tries to bring Joey out to plough but, distrustful of him, Joey kicks out and Ted returns to the house defeated, and with a pronounced limp. The following morning Ted and Albert return, Albert's face red with tears. Albert has a choice: either he trains Joey to plough, and pull his weight on the farm, or Ted will be forced to sell him in order to keep up the mortgage payments. Albert rises to the challenge, succeeds in getting Joey to plough, and his father agrees that he can keep him.

Albert and his father are always at loggerheads and Joey begins to distrust Albert's father further. Joey's mother defends her husband, explaining that money worries and the threat of the war prey constantly on his mind and lead him to drink. She asks Albert to try to understand his father's tempers a bit more, and be grateful for everything he's done for him.

One night, Ted Narracott comes back to the stable to fetch Joey, and this time uses Zoey as a ploy to get him to leave the stable quietly. He leads Zoey and Joey into town where soldiers have gathered in the square. Captain Nicholls agrees that Joey is the best horse in the parish and buys him from Ted for the war effort. With tears in his eyes, and admitting that he's treated everyone badly – particularly Albert – Ted bids goodbye to Joey. Joey is devastated and just when he has given up all hope of ever seeing Albert again, notices him running towards him. Albert pleads with Captain Nicholls to accept him into his army but, now 16, he is too young to go. He entreats Nicholls to do everything he can to take care of Joey, and promises him that one day he will find him. Captain Nicholls gives Albert his word.

Joey is to be trained up to be a cavalry horse, and work starts immediately. Captain Nicholls enlists Corporal Samuel Perkins to take on the task, but Joey immediately takes a dislike to his brash manner, and his strict and harsh methods. However, Joey develops a real fondness for Captain Nicholls. Nicholls confides in Joey and tells him about his concerns about the war as though he were an old friend. He sketches Joey in his book, and promises to send copies to Albert. Eventually, he demands that Samuel Perkins train Joey with more care and consideration. As the horses are taken out on the last manoeuvres before going to war, Joey meets Nicholls' good friend Captain Stewart and his tall shining stallion, Topthorn. The next day, the two horses find themselves on a liner en route to France. Joey gains comfort from Topthorn's presence and they soon become friends. Edging towards the sound of the guns on arrival, the army charge towards the enemy but, all at once, Captain Nicholls is killed in the onslaught.

The next day, Captain Stewart puts Joey into the charge of young Trooper Warren. Devastated at his friend's sudden death, he gives him firm instructions to take good care of Nicholls' horse.

Joey and Topthorn see very little action in the coming months as they are used for transport instead of mounted infantry. It is a bitter winter of snow and sleet. Trooper Warren lifts Joey's spirits by coming to speak to him often. Before long, however, the horses are forced out onto the battlefield again amidst shells, death and destruction. One day, Topthorn, Trooper Warren, Captain Stewart and Joey find themselves directly within enemy lines. Unlike the rest of the horses, Joey and Topthorn manage to survive the barbed wire that has claimed so many of their companions' lives. Inevitably, Captain Stewart and Trooper Warren are soon taken prisoner by the Germans.

Now within German ranks, Herr Hauptmann takes Joey and Topthorn under his wing, and despite his protestations, is reluctantly persuaded that the two horses need to be used to transport wounded and dead soldiers to and from the trenches. The horses are hailed as heroes. Joey and Topthorn are befriended by a young French girl called Emilie and her grandfather, whose farm they use for shelter. Emilie does all she can to take care of Joey and Topthorn. Having lost her family in the war, the horses become her soul reason for living. When she is struck down by pneumonia, it is for them that she stays alive.

The story (continued...)

One day, it is decided to move the hospital further up the valley, and so the horses are handed back to Emilie and her grandfather for good. Joey can go back to what he does best: good old fashioned farmwork. But their idyllic summer on their farm is short lived and the soldiers soon return to claim Joey and Tophorn back for the war effort. Emilie is devastated, but vows that she too will see them again.

The next few months prove to be the hardest. Food is scarce and conditions harsher than ever. They and four other horses – Heine and Coco, and two twin flaxen ponies called ‘the two golden Haflingers’ – work together through the terrible stench of war. The cold stinking mud, and lack of proper food, soon shrink the horses to half their original size, and their bodies become covered in sores. Many others are shot dead as a result and Tophorn begins to struggle every day to keep up.

That summer, however, now away from battle and free to roam as they please, Joey and Tophorn come under the command of the kind soldier who had looked after them within the German ranks: ‘mad old Friedrich’ – Herr Hauptmann. Hauptmann takes a particular shine to Tophorn.

The day soon comes when it is time to return to battle, but as they charge in, Tophorn’s strength leaves him and he collapses and dies. Friedrich and Joey are both devastated. As the shells begin to explode around them, neither is able to leave his side. As danger nears, Friedrich tries desperately to save Joey, but having left it too late to make his escape, he is struck down by a mortar shell.

That day and night, Joey – frozen by fear – is unable to move but, pushed on by hunger, escapes the gunfire. He wanders lonely and terrified through the war torn French countryside, wounding one of his legs almost fatally. He eventually arrives in No Man’s Land. Delighted at this miraculous sight, both sides send in an emissary to decide who should take ownership of the lost animal. Having argued the toss, the British come out the winners.

Barely able to walk now, Joey is brought to the British Army’s veterinary wagon. At the hospital, Joey, caked in mud, is greeted by Sergeant Thunder and Major Martin and is commandeered by a red-faced young boy, whom he recognises as his Albert. Albert remains oblivious until, with his best friend David’s help, he cleans Joey up and Albert and Joey are finally reunited.

However, their joy is only short lived. The strain of the last few months has taken its toll, and Joey develops the life threatening condition lock-jaw. Major Martin is convinced there is nothing they can do for him, but David persuades him that they vowed to do all they could for each and every one of their horses – now is not the time to give up. So Albert, David, Sergeant Thunder and Major Martin go to work to cure him. After months of care and attention, Joey eventually comes through and, with time, is as good as new. As the war drags on, it claims the life of Albert’s closest friend David. Devastated, Albert is close to breaking point – he just wants to go home.

Eventually, news arrives that the war is over. Inexpressibly

relieved Joey is overjoyed and everyone rejoices. However a crestfallen Major Martin reveals he has been given orders to sell all the war horses off at auction in France. Albert is in shock but they are adamant that Joey will not be made to remain in France. Major Martin, Sergeant Thunder and all at the hospital pool enough money to buy him instead.

To everyone’s surprise an old man joins the auction, sending Joey’s price beyond what any of them can afford. Joey suddenly recognises the man as Emilie’s grandfather. The grandfather tells Albert that Emilie recently died. Her wish was that he find Joey and Tophorn and return them to their farm. Having looked far and wide, he has finally found them. However, meeting Albert, and seeing that Joey has finally been reunited with his rightful owner, he decides that Emilie would have wanted them to be together. Albert and Joey can finally go home.

Back in Devon, Albert marries his sweetheart, Maisie Cobbledick (although she and Joey never quite become the best of friends) and he takes over Narracott farm. For Joey and his family, life continues much as before, but one feels that it will never be quite the same again.

[See the synopsis for *War Horse* \(the play\) on page 5 of this education pack](#)



Friedrich Müller (Richard Cant)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Inspiration

What inspires people to write novels/plays in the first place?

EXPLORE

- Read the article by Morpurgo on www.michaelmorpurgo.org/books_war_horse.html or in the National Theatre's *War Horse* programme.
- Read the author's note at the beginning of the novel. Morpurgo writes as though he has been inspired by a real painting of Joey. In the article mentioned above, he talks of a painting of a cavalry charge, but the painting of Joey is fictional. What effect does using the author's note, to add immediacy to the story, have on the reader?
- Read the letter from Matthew Beaumont Parrington – Tom Morris' (one of the directors of *War Horse*) great-grandfather – to his son, about looking after horses during war.
(see page 65 of this pack)
Discuss stories and advice handed down through generations of families. Why might these be particularly powerful stimuli for writers/ theatre-makers?
- As homework, speak to family members about some of their own family legends. This could inspire some creative writing or be used to create a display: of family recipes, traditions, myths, photographs, for example.

ACTIVITY

- Ask students to bring in an object linked to one of the family stories/traditions that they have researched – medals, jewellery, traditional clothing, farm equipment, books etc – or an object, artwork or text that could inspire them in the way Morpurgo was inspired by the painting.
 - » Tell the story of your object and how it came to be owned by you or your family. This could be conducted as a speaking and listening exercise, or a piece of written work.
 - » Introduce the idea of anthropomorphism – what qualities would your object have if it was human? What stories might it have to tell? For example, a torch could be an explorer; a leader of an oppressed people; an investigative journalist; or someone who is able to switch their emotions on and off.
 - » It may be interesting to swap objects with another person to see how their object inspires you.



Albert (Kit Harington) with Joey (Craig Leo)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

Songs of war

EXPLORE

- Why do people write poetry and songs? In what ways are poems and songs similar? How do they differ?
- Explore the links between the lyrics of modern songs and poetry. Students could bring in their own examples.

ACTIVITY

- Look at *The War Horse Songbook*, by John Tams, that can be found at the back of the playscript.
 - » Look at the contrasts between the positive and optimistic lyrics of 'The Scarlet and the Blue' and the third stanza of 'Rolling Home'.
 - » Explore why so many of the lyrics written by Tams make reference to ploughing, harvest and farming in general.
 - » Read the poem 'A Private' by Edward Thomas which also talks about a 'ploughman dead in battle' at <http://www.netpoets.com/classic/poems/065006.htm>.

EXPLORE

- Listen to some of the songs from the First World War e.g. at <http://www.ww1photos.com/WW1MusicIndex.html> or www.firstworldwar.com and discuss the contrasts between the rousing songs sung to inspire recruitment and keep a feeling of jubilation alive, and those that describe a more cynical view of the war.
 - » Some suggestions:
 - 'Pack Up Your Troubles in your Old Kit Bag'
 - 'Oh! What a Lovely War'
 - 'But for Gawd's Sake Don't Send Me'
 - 'Are We Down Hearted?'
 - 'Bombed Last Night'
 - » Book resource: *When this Bloody War is Over: Soldiers' Songs of the First World*

ACTIVITY – DRAMA 'Dulce et Decorum Est'

- Read the poem 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen – which can be found at <http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/owen1.html> – and discuss the experiences described.
 - » Explore the significance of the title before reading the poem and predict what the poem will be about.
 - » Look at the colour code used to describe the different senses in 'Dulce et Decorum Est'. Look at the use of direct speech and how this creates immediacy.
- Hand out the following lines from the poem and the play to groups of three or four:
 - » Ambush! Machine Gun! Break line! Fall Back!
 - » Albert! Gas! ... Narracott! Narracott! Gas! Gas mask on!
 - » Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!
 - » An ecstasy of fumbling fitting the clumsy helmets just in time
 - » Bent double like old beggars under sack, knock kneed, coughing like hags
 - » Halt! Enemy spotted!
 - » Where the hell's all that coming from?
 - » Many had lost their boots but limped on, blood-shod
 - » All went lame; all blind; / Drunk with fatigue



Ted Narracott (Steve Nicolson) and Rose Narracott (Rachel Sanders)

PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Songs of war (continued...)

ACTIVITY – DRAMA

'Dulce et Decorum Est' contd...

- » Read and discuss the lines. Which lines do you think come from the poem and which are taken from the play? Are some easier to spot than others? Why is this?
- » Prepare a dramatic presentation of the lines using speech/action/freeze frame or other dramatic devices.
- Read the stage directions on page 35 of the play of *War Horse* describing the first sight of Calais. How would you choose to show this on stage? What devices can you use to show the change in mood from being on the boat, to being confronted with the sights the soldiers witness on arrival?
Teacher Note: – in the production, the use of song and silence are significant.
- In groups, perform scene 18 of the play. Discuss how David and Albert are feeling and how they try to keep their spirits up.

Link to war songs and to Woodbine Willy's poems – 'The Spirit' (<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/trench/trench.html>) which uses contrasts between the stark realities of war and the need to "carry on", and 'The Secret' which uses humour.

Teacher Note: – you could link this idea to use of humour as a dramatic device in the plays e.g. the use of the goose puppet (if you've already seen the play) and Sergeant Thunder's swearing.

See **Transformations** for more ideas on comic relief.

ACTIVITY – WRITING

Diary Entry

- **Writing Task** – you are a young soldier in France in the trenches during WWI, away from home for the first time. Write your diary entry for the first night. Think about what you might see, hear, smell, touch and taste. Remember to include how you are feeling, physically and emotionally, as well as the thoughts that you have about your situation.



David Taylor (Paul Chequer) and Albert (Kit Harington)



Albert (Kit Harington) and Sergeant Thunder (Howard Ward)
PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND

Transformations: adapting a novel to the stage

EXPLORE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why would someone change a novel into a play? What sort of decisions do you think need to be made? You may want to think about: characters, narrators, descriptions, sustaining tension and the passage of time.

Important for this section: Read extract 1 (see page 66 of this scheme of work).

ACTIVITY – READING

- Read the extract from the novel revealing the announcement of the war (pages 19 & 20). Highlight the techniques Morpurgo has used to show the different family members' reactions to this news. In a different colour, highlight the parts of this extract that you think are most important and should be included in the play.
- Read the extract from the play (page 26) when the bells peal and Carter makes the announcement that Great Britain is at war with Germany. Discuss what is different about these two extracts. Why do you think the writer chose a public setting in the play compared to the private, family setting, in the novel? Discuss the role of characters who deliver information that would otherwise be given by a narrator as description.



From left: Paulette (Pascale Burgess), Emilie (Kate Colebrook) and Friedrich (Richard Cant), with Joey (Jack Parker/Owain Gwynn/Emily Cooper) and Tophthorn (Jordan Curtis/Shawn McKee/Thomas Goodridge)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

EXPLORE

• Back Stories: the novel

» In the play, Nick Stafford has included more information about some of the minor characters who appear in the novel. Albert's mother is a minor character who is not even given a name in the novel.

Discussion questions: Morpurgo suggests certain hardships in her life but gives no real details or explanations. Why do you think he does this?

» On Page 8 'Don't speak like that about your father, Albert. He's been through a lot. It's not right,' said his mother. But her words lacked conviction.

» Bottom of page 22 from 'There would be long and heated exchanges in the yard...' to 'You've got to try to understand him, Albert. He deserves that much.' (page 23)

» **Discussion Questions:** What do we find out about Albert's mother? What kind of character does she seem to be? How do you expect her to be portrayed in the play?

ACTIVITY – READING

• Extract play

» In the play, Nick Stafford has chosen to tell us a lot more about Rose Narracott. Why do you think he gave her this name?

» Now read the following extract from the play, on page 20 from: Albert: 'If ya hate me so much maybe I should just run away!' to: Rose: 'I really envy you, Albert – your ability ta dream.' (page 22)

» Experiment reading it in pairs to show different emotions. The characters could show anger, love, disappointment, sadness, or regret.

» **Discussion Questions:** which emotions seem to fit best – how do you think the director/actors have chosen to perform this scene?

Transformations: adapting a novel to the stage (continued...)

ACTIVITY – WRITING

- Read extracts from page 70 of the novel – from ‘Still no-one seemed to know quite what to do with us’ to ‘now get moving’ (p 71) and ‘The tall officer drew himself up to his full height’ to ‘You cannot do it Doctor, I will not permit it.’ (p 73)
 - » What do you know about Friedrich from the extract taken from the novel? Why is he there? Who has he left behind at home? How does he
- Make sure that you have read extract 1 from Mervyn Millar’s *The Horse’s Mouth* (see page 26 of this scheme of work) in which Nick Stafford talks about developing Morpurgo’s minor characters.
 - » What techniques do you need to use to describe or introduce a character when you cannot use a narrator or prose description? Consider how characters introduce themselves; stage directions; other characters’ dialogue; use of costume; facial expressions; posture.
 - » Get the students to write a short section of playscript introducing the character of Friedrich. Possible ideas could be: two of the officers in his charge talk about him; Friedrich talks to Joey; Friedrich writes to someone back home and reads as he writes; Friedrich gives a speech to the other soldiers. If he was writing a letter, would he be able to describe everything that was happening? Or would there be some things he wouldn’t be allowed to reveal?



Captain Nicholls (Alex Avery)
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

EXPLORE – THE ENDINGS

Endings:

- The reunion between Joey and Albert:
Discussion: Why would Nick Stafford and Tom Morris have chosen to present Joey in danger towards the end of the play when this doesn’t happen in the novel. Compare chapter 17 from the novel with scene 29 from the play and discuss the different ways the reunion is presented.
- **Comparing the endings:**
 - » What is significantly different about the two endings?
 - » Which do you think is more effective?
 - » Which do you prefer?

» ACTIVITY – READING

- Read the final chapter of the novel.
 - » **Discussion Questions:**
What is the effect of having a second auction at the end of the book?
 - » How is tension created?
 - » How do you think Joey feels at the end of the novel?
 - » How satisfied are you by this ending? How would you write this differently?
- Read Scenes 29 and 30 of the play (where both Joey and Albert end up in the same camp, injured).
 - » **Discussion Questions:**
How is tension created in these scenes? Why do you think the writer/director chose to change the ending? Read extract 2 from *The Horse’s Mouth*, (see page 66 of this scheme of work).
 - » How satisfied are you by this ending? How would you write this differently?

Transformations: adapting a novel to the stage (continued...)

EXPLORE – THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

In the novel, Joey understands all of the characters, whether they speak in English, French or German. Why do you think Morpurgo chose to write the novel this way?

In the play, Joey only understands English and this is the language Freidrich speaks to him in. How does this influence our view of both the German and English sides?

If you wrote a play in a different language, what would you need to do to make sure the audience understands what is happening or being said?
(Clues: consider facial expression; gestures; movement; blocking; status; tone of voice; volume)

ACTIVITY – DRAMA

Imagine any scenario, for example meeting a new friend, being told off by a parent, buying some sweets in a shop. All of the characters in your scene speak a language that the rest of the class cannot understand (make up your own gobbledygook language). Perform your scene using the techniques discussed – can you make yourself understood?



'Over the top'
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Dramatic devices

EXPLORE – COMIC RELIEF

- » When Albert finds himself in the army, look at how Sergeant Thunder’s swearing is used to relieve this tension.
This could be an effective scene to act out using various dramatic devices to create atmosphere.
- » If you have seen the play, discuss the effect of the puppet goose – how did the audience react to it? Why do you think the goose was included? (Reminder – the goose chases Arthur Narracott off stage after the ploughing scene and has the door shut on him at a certain point).
- » Discuss why this sort of comic relief is necessary in a play that deals with the subject of war. You could link this with the previous question relating to songs the soldiers sing to keep their spirits up.
- » Link this idea to other plays that you have studied – for instance the use of Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* or Trinculo and Stephano in *The Tempest*.

ACTIVITY – DRAMA

Staging: the passage of time

If you have seen the play, you might like to consider the following devices for showing the passage of time/other effects:

- » The puppet for Joey as a foal breaks up to reveal the adult Joey puppet behind him.
- » When Albert is training Joey to plough, he tells the audience it is “Day one” etc.
- » Use of the swallows.
- » Ships are carried across the stage to represent the journey across the channel.
- » Projections on the stage wall show dates and places – Calais 1 November 1914; Marne Valley etc.
- » Use of slow motion when Nicholls dies.
- » The bodies of soldiers are left on the stage when the scene returns to Devon.
- Create your own performances of scenes from the story, or role plays of scenarios given to you by a teacher – which show the passage of time – exploring the use of these dramatic devices.

Suggested sections from the story:

- » Joey as a foal growing up to be an adult horse.
- » Joey learning to plough (seven days).
- » Men signing up to join the army to the point when they leave for France.
- » Soldiers’ arrival in France until their return home.
- » Albert running away from home until he goes to war in France.
- » Joey losing Tophorn till the moment he finds Albert.
- Look at links to Shakespeare, and other playwrights you may have studied, who use references to day and night etc to show the passage of time.

Staging: recreating the auction

- Read scene two
- » Set up a drama activity putting students in different roles during the auction scene at the beginning of the play e.g. as Joey is being bartered over and sold; as Ted is trying to get one over on his brother-in-law etc.
- » Bring in props and costumes for this activity. Set up the room to include the pen in which Joey is being held and decide where the farmers and auctioneer will be positioned. Try to recreate the sounds and atmosphere of the auction using words from the text or improvisation.

EXPLORE – SET DESIGN

• Questions:

What sort of space do you need to tell this story? If you were telling the story on stage, which scenes would you include? How many different settings would you choose? What scenery and props would you include?

In the NT production, actors are often used to hold up objects that represent scenery. Why do you think this method was chosen? Do you think it was effective?

Dramatic devices (continued...)

ACTIVITY – SET DESIGN

Part 1

Focus on consecutive scenes with contrasting locations, for instance, scenes one and two.

- Build the set in a cardboard box.

Fill in the template of the stage with your set ideas including backdrop, scenery objects, where characters will be on stage, lighting and costumes.

ACTIVITY – SET DESIGN

Part 2

- Give out four pictures showing Rae Smith's designs (See pages 69-71 of this workpack) for the projected backdrop and ask students to label them with denotation and connotation. (These pictures were projected onto a large screen behind the action on stage.)

» These projections represent pages from Major Nicholls' sketchbook. How do they show the changing scenes within the play? Which parts of the story do you think they show? What do you think they tell you about Major Nicholls' feelings and reactions at different points in the play, and the emotional journey he undertakes?

» Discuss how the style of Smith's drawings changes (from pastoral to Vorticist). See this website for other examples of Vorticism at <http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=312>. Discuss the effects of light and dark within the pictures.

- In the play, read from page 75 to the end of scene 26.

» Draw what you would project behind the action.

» Discuss the type of stage lighting you would use to accompany your pictures, or choose different scenes from the play and discuss how lighting could be used to create atmosphere. Consider how different characters could be lit within the same scene. (See page 32 of this scheme of work for examples of this).



Joey and Tophorn



John Greig (Joshua Blake), Chapman Carter (Ewen Cummins) and Thomas Bone (Mat Ruttle), with William Rycroft and Tophorn (Jordan/McKee/Goodridge)



Tophorn and Joey

PHOTOS BY SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Dramatic devices (continued...)

EXPLORE – THE PUPPETS

- Look at the pictures of the puppets **(on page 74 of this scheme of work)**. Why do you think these were created for the play? How do you think they will be used and controlled on stage? If you've seen the play, how did the presence of the puppeteers affect how you watched the play? Did you forget they were there? Did their presence make the horse seem more real or alive?

ACTIVITY – THE PUPPETS

- Read "Puppet and Character Work" **(on page 69 of this scheme of work)**. What do you find interesting about these rules? How easy do you think they are to follow?
- Use the puppet rules to create a role play in which Albert teaches Joey to eat oats from a bucket.

Either:

- » In groups of three: Joey; puppeteer (who manipulates the pupil playing Joey) and Albert
- » In groups of two: Joey and Albert
- » Or individual activity: Albert and a table or chair to represent Joey
- Have a go at making your own puppets and use them to do the activity above. **(See page 73 for original designs of the *War Horse* puppets for some inspiration)**



Joey (Jack Parker/Owain Gwynn/Emily Cooper)



Arthur Narracott (Robert Horwell), Billy Narracott (Luke Jerdy), Chapman Carter (Ewen Cummins) and ensemble



Song Man (Bob Fox) and Fiddler (Eliot Short)

PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Cross curricular activities / other resources

- **Christmas Day Truce:** accounts of this are similar to the scene with Joey in the middle of No Man's Land. See <http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/RTE34.html> for a copy of a readers' theatre playscript based on the Christmas truce which students could read together in class.

- Links to other texts:

» **Fiction:**

- *War Horse*, the novel by former Children's Laureate, Michael Morpurgo, ISBN: 0-7497-4850-8, £5.99, published by Egmont (available from the NT Bookshop)
- *War Horse* – the play, Nick Stafford's stage adaptation of the novel, ISBN: 978-0-571-24015-9, £8.99, published by Faber and Faber (available from the NT Bookshop)
- *Animal Farm*, George Orwell; *Watership Down*, Richard Adams – links to anthropomorphism
- *Private Peaceful*, Michael Morpurgo (also available from the NT Bookshop) – different points of view of war; compare Joey's views with Tommo's experiences

» **Drama:**

- *Journey's End*, R. C. Sheriff – the psychological impacts of war
- *Oh! What a Lovely War* – different points of view of war; good source of statistics

» **Non fiction:**

- Wilfred Owen, Letter to Susan (his mother) 16 January 1917 – see http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/wilfred_owen_gallery_02.shtml
- *The Non-Fiction Book*, English and Media Centre – section writing reportage about the Bosnian War

- **Handspring Puppet Company:**

Learn more about this extraordinary South African Puppet Company.

<http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za>

- See **Dramatic Devices** section on set building for possible links with Art and Design Technology.
- **For more resources, see the other listings in this *War Horse* education pack**



Topthorn (Jordan/McKee/Goodridge) and Captain Stewart (William Rycroft)



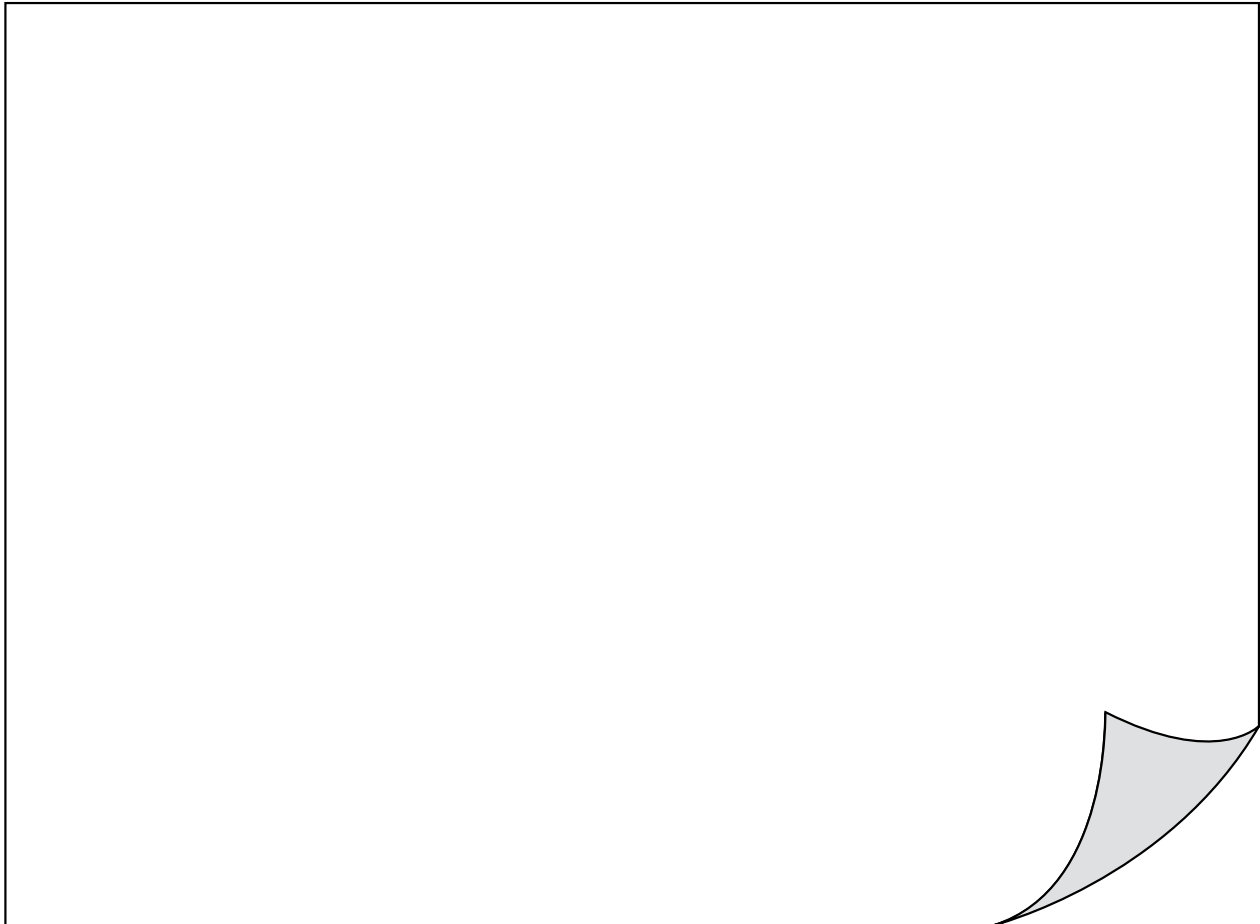
Goose, puppeteered by Curtis Jordan

PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Final assessment task 1

Rewrite the ending of the novel as a playscript.

1. Reread the last two chapters of the novel.
2. You will not be able to include everything in your play version so pick out the most important bits and write what you want to include in the box below. Say why you think they are important:

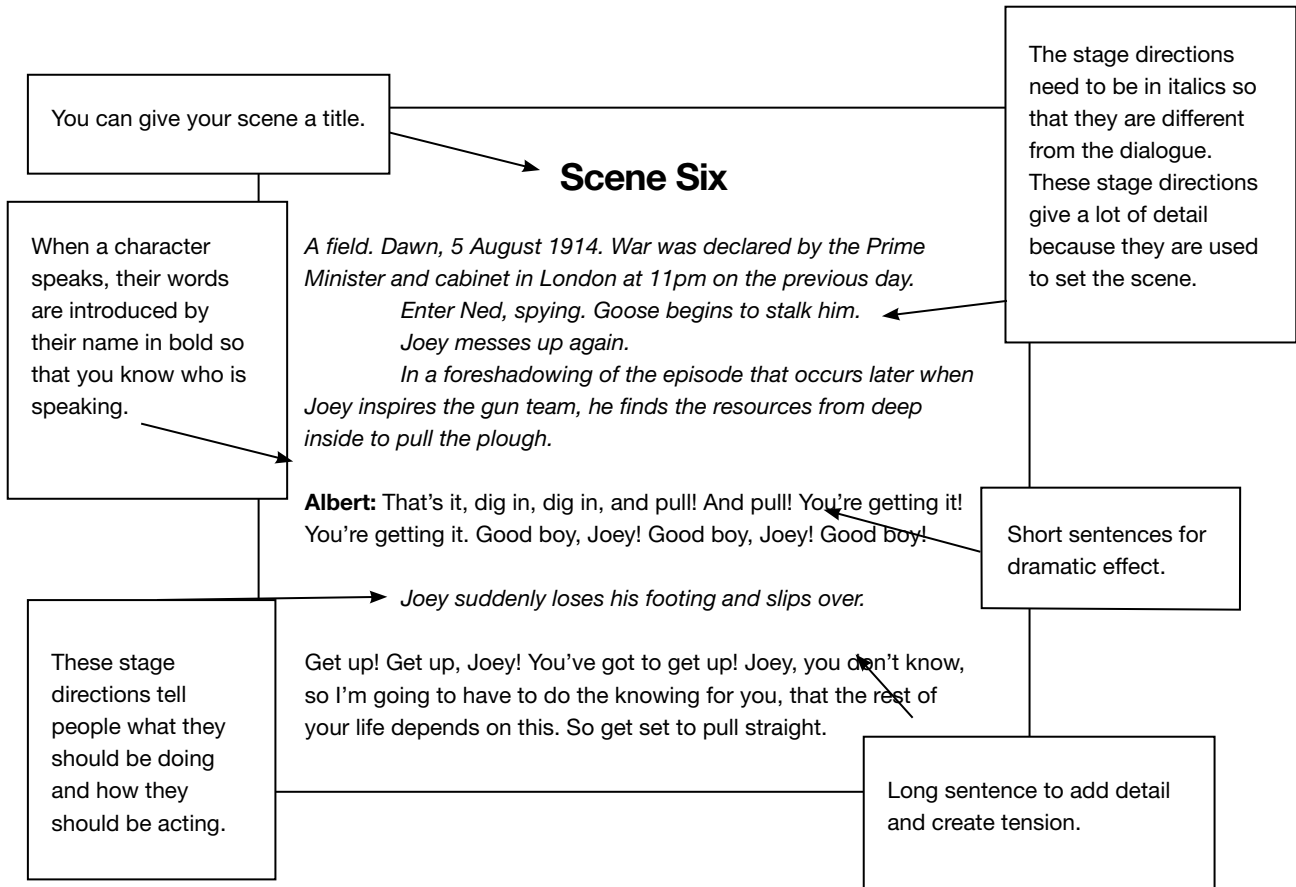


Now that you have decided what you want to include, you need to think about dramatic devices and language techniques that you could use in your ending. Pick at least four from this list:

- References to the passage of time
- Use of monologue and dialogue
- Stage directions to show what characters do and how they react/are feeling
- Dramatic Irony – when one or more characters doesn't know something that the audience does in order to create tension
- Comic relief – will you include something funny to ease tension?
- Specific vocabulary relating to war and horses
- Withholding information to create tension
- Interesting adjectives
- Short sentences for dramatic effect
- Long sentences to add detail

Continued over the page...

Layout



Assessment criteria

You will be assessed on the following criteria so use this as a checklist while you are writing.

Use an appropriate form and layout (remember not to use the third person)	
Use at least 4 of the devices from the list	
Use effective or powerful vocabulary	
Use a range of sentence types (simple, compound, complex) and lengths	
Use a range of punctuation	

Have fun!

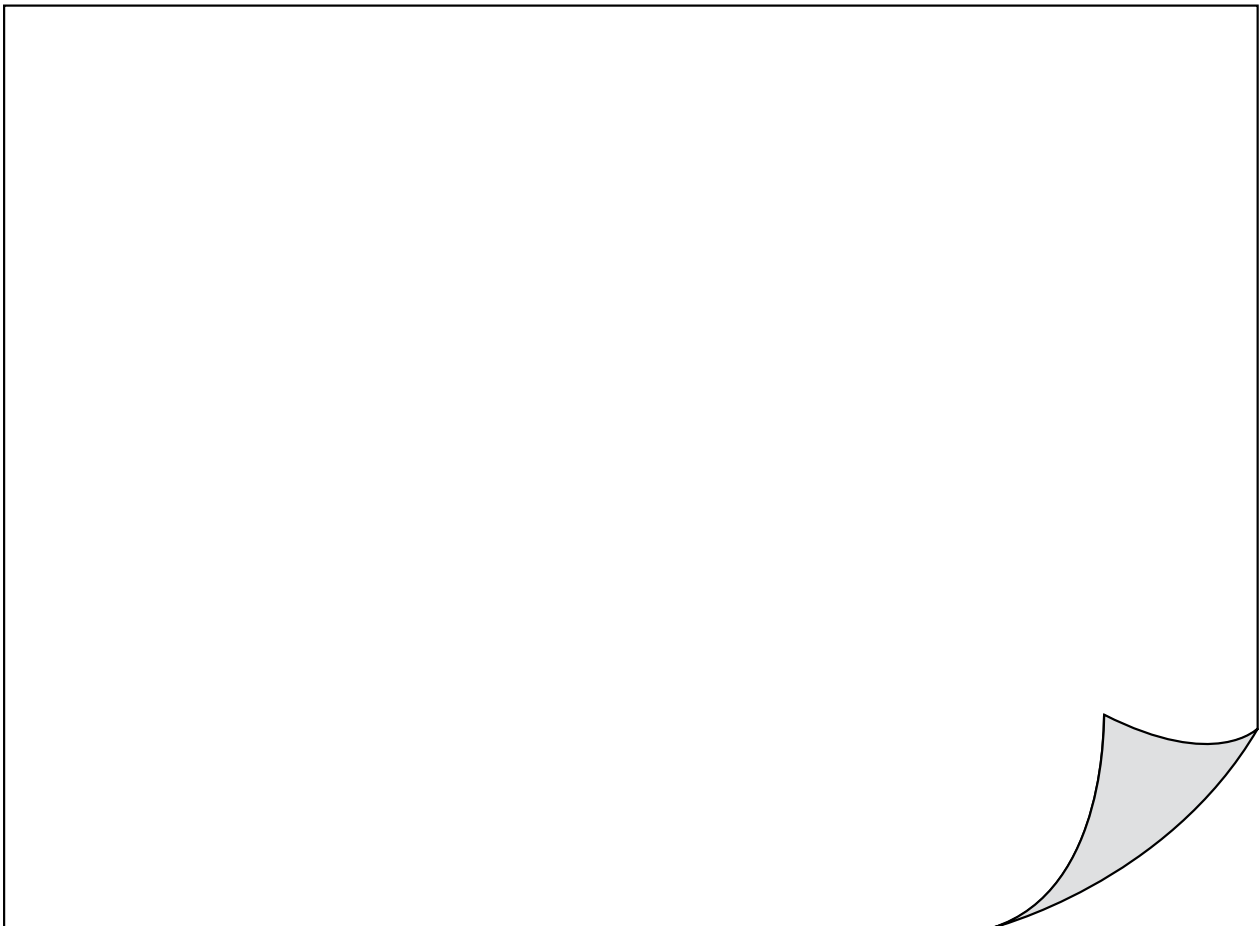
Final assessment task 2

Your task is to rewrite the ending of the play in the style of the novel.

1. Reread the last two scenes of the play.
2. You will need to add description and remember that Joey is the narrator.

Here's what happens at the end of the play. Use the box below to write your ideas about any description and narration you could add.

- Albert is at a British camp and is temporarily blind.
- Joey has been brought to the camp from No Man's Land. He is badly injured and they are about to shoot him.
- Sergeant Thunder recognises Albert.
- The gun fails when they try to shoot Joey.
- Albert starts talking about Joey and the horse recognises his voice and tries to get to him.
- Sergeant Thunder realises that this is Albert's horse.
- Joey and Albert are reunited.
- Albert takes Joey home.



Contd over the page...

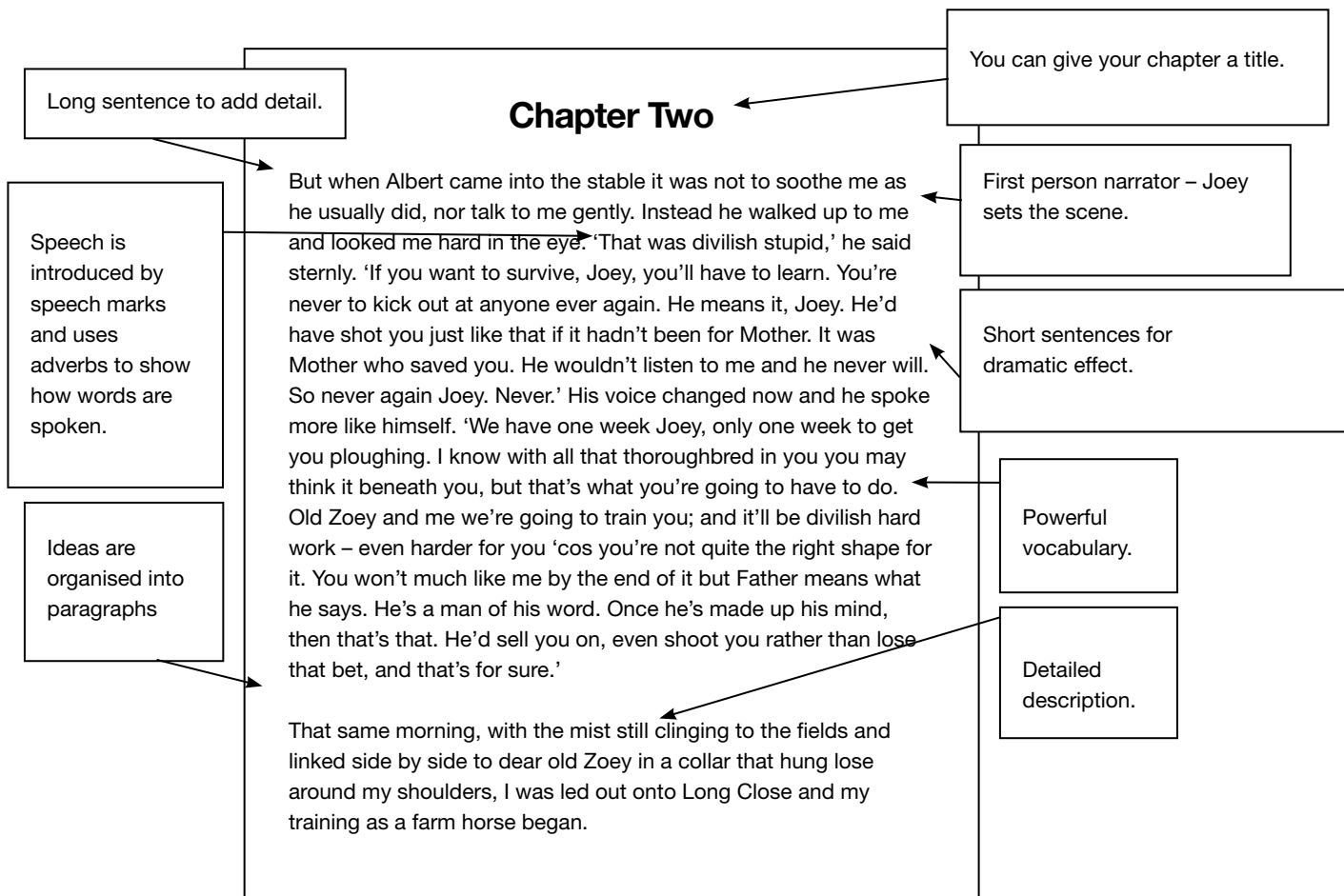
Now you have decided on what you want to include, you need to think about language techniques that you could use in your ending. Pick at least four from this list:

Features of Michael Morpurgo’s writing

- Repetition
- Superlative adjectives
- Powerful vocabulary
- First person narrator
- Creating suspense by delaying details until the end of sentence
- Short sentences for impact
- Complex sentences for detail
- Lists of three
- Use of emotions/feelings
- Detailed descriptions

Layout:

Remember you need to lay out your prose correctly. Use this example as your model:



Assessment criteria

You will be assessed on the following criteria so use this as a checklist while you are writing.

Use an appropriate form and layout (remember to use description, first person narrative and paragraphs and speech marks)	
Use at least 4 of the devices from the list	
Use effective or powerful vocabulary	
Use a range of sentence types (simple, compound, complex) and lengths	
Use a range of punctuation	

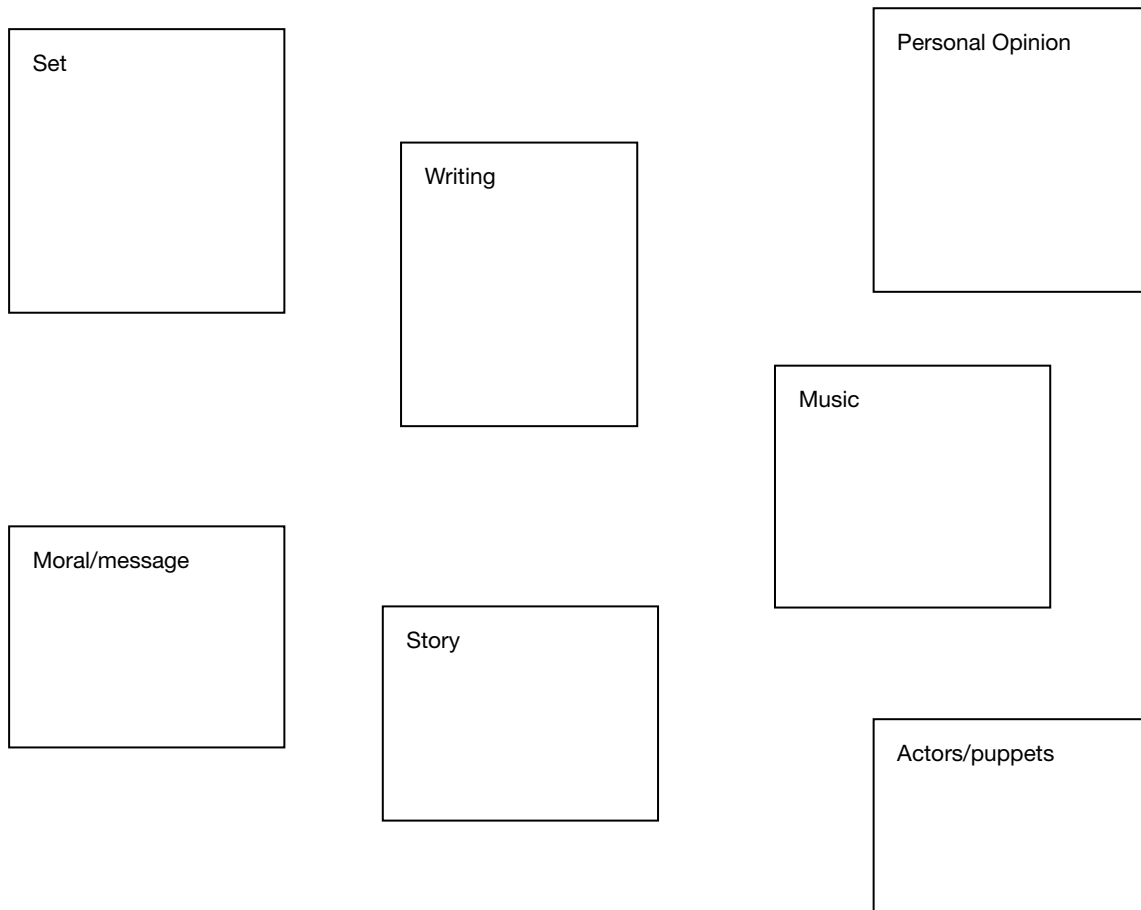


Joey and Goose
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

Final assessment task 3

Your task is to write a review of the performance of *War Horse* that you saw.

Use this spider diagram to add your own ideas about the play for your review.



The purpose of a review is to describe, analyse and evaluate what you have seen and persuade or dissuade people from going to see it. You need to give your opinion and support this with evidence.

You will need to choose some effective techniques to make your writing engaging. Choose at least four from this list.

Features of Michael Morpurgo's writing

- Rhetorical questions
- Lists of three
- Sentence that hooks you at the beginning
- Emotive language
- Humour
- Facts and opinions
- Adjectives

Use these paragraphs to help you:

Introduction: Hook the reader with your opening sentence. Give a brief idea of what the story of the play is without giving the ending away.

Paragraph 2: Include information about Michael Morpurgo's book and Nick Stafford's adaptation.

Main section: Write a paragraph about each of these aspects of the production – set; music; actors and puppets. Convey your personal opinion of each – what did you like/dislike/find effective? Remember to use specific examples from the play.

Moral/message: Explain what you think is the moral or message suggested by the play. How do you think different people in the audience would have responded to the play?

Conclusion: Give your overall opinion of the play and sum up what you have written in the rest of the review. Don't say anything new at this point.

Check out the following websites for examples of theatre reviews:

www.theatrebuff.seatwaveblogs.com;

www.telegraph.co.uk;

www.guardian.co.uk;

www.londontheatre.co.uk, etc

Assessment criteria

You will be assessed on the following criteria so use this as a checklist while you are writing.

Use an appropriate form and layout (remember to use full sentences and paragraphs)	
Use effective or powerful vocabulary	
Use a range of sentence types (simple, compound, complex) and lengths	
Use a range of punctuation	

Resources

Hints on horses

A letter from Tom Morris' great-grandfather

Ashprington, Totnes, Devon

September 29, 1914

...Now for hints on horses although I do hope you won't have to go after all. The war must change in its nature entirely before long. It can't possibly last as it is and where it is...

When campaigning, there are lots of little things you can do with horses which may save you a lot of trouble and a lot of danger. First about food: you will have that all in your instructions I suppose, but for an ordinary horse doing ordinary work, 15lbs good oats and about 10lbs – 12lbs of clean hay or other bulky food per day. Also when you get a chance give a few beetroot or other roots cut up in their corn. Carrots are the best. A horse should be fed three times a day but you must feed when you can, water as often as possible but never just before fast work. When you off saddle at night let them drink as much as they like before food when they come in tired.

Never sit in the saddle when you are not wanted there, always dismount. And if you come to a very stiff climb always get off and lead your horse if you can or if you may. You will be surprised what these little considerations do for a horse. And you must remember that mounted troops are only useful so long as their horses are fit and well.

After a long journey, never take off the saddle until his back has cooled (this applies to collars and harness too) down. Slacken the girth and lift the saddle a little and put it back again until the back is cool. Then unsaddle and put on cloth. Then a very good plan is to go round in the evening when horses are picketed and feel their ears. If they are cold and damp they must be dried. Rub till they are dry with your hands if you have no cloth. Horses which have been a little overdone will often go wrong in the night if care is not taken in this way.

Then lumps and bumps. Never mind if it's a bruise or a sprain, bathe it immediately you stop work for the day with a sponge and fresh supplies of hot water till the place feels quite cooked through, then put a bandage (not tight) round it to keep away the cold. If there is no hot water, get a linen bandage or several and wrap them loosely round the places after thoroughly wetting them in cold water, and mind they keep wet all night. In the morning if he must work or not, put the wet bandages on before starting and leave them on all day, but of course they must be tight enough to keep from slipping.

If you can, always take hoods with you for putting on the horses at night after their heads and ears have been well dried. No one knows the great benefit this is. Never put a damp rug on a horse. If he is very hot when he has finished work and a cold wind blowing, put a thick pad of hay or straw or dry litter on his loins, then throw a rug loosely over it. This will enable a horse to dry without getting cold, also

without wetting his cloth through with steam. Horses out of condition, especially young ones, you will have a lot of trouble with in this way as, after hard work, they keep breaking out into fresh sweats and will soon start shivering, when inflammation may set in at any moment. A third of a pint of whisky with twice or three times the quantity of water poured down his throat will often do wonders for a tired working horse and bring him to his feed, and it can never do any harm.

From Matthew Beaumont Parrington estate manager and farmer, to his son who was going to war. Parrington was Tom Morris' great-grandfather.



Joey as a Foal (Meghan Treadway/John Trindle/Kate Colebrook)

PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND, November 2011

Resources

Extract 1 from Mervyn Millar's *The Horse's Mouth*

One of the most memorable passages in the book comes in the first cavalry action in France, when Nicholls is, shockingly, shot from his mount.

Morpurgo's use of perspective is compelling – the horse's back is one of its few blind spots, and so Joey's sensation is of sound, and of the weight of Nicholls being lifted from his back – a beautifully understated sequence, elegant and minimal. On stage, the event of Nicholls being blown off the back of a horse has a very different effect – it's a spectacular set-piece. With something as visually extraordinary as this happening, it's impossible to keep the focus inside Joey's head, as Morpurgo is able to do on the page.

"The book is not easy to turn into a play," says [Adrian] Kohler [Handspring Puppets], "because it's a journey, the horse is meeting many different characters, and as the horse doesn't speak, how do you sustain the drama through the piece?" As National Theatre Director Nicholas Hytner warns, "The toughest thing that they've got to achieve is a theatre structure that is compelling, tense and involving from beginning to end. There is no getting around the fact that for a large-scale piece of populist theatre, which sets out to engage as many people as possible, a well-structured, tense, and involving narrative is an absolute necessity." And with this in mind, the team set about building a narrative structure around the events in the book. The first step of this, drawn up a full two years before the first performance, was a 13-page breakdown of the action created by Tom Morris, following the plotting of the book and proposing scenes suitable for dramatisation.

An essential part of Stafford's task in making any play is to populate the stage with characters. Morpurgo's Nicholls is only what Joey describes of him: the Olivier audience's version of him, to be played by an actor, needs to be more fully explored: "The humans," notes Stafford, "only exist via the horse in the book. They have to take on completely independent lives, and to be, more or less, created." Because Joey will not be explaining what's happening, as Marianne Elliott [co-director] says, "you have to fill out the

story, because, if other characters are going to tell it, rather than the horse, then they have to live as three-dimensional characters, rather than impressions the horse has."

Morpurgo's restriction of perspective means he can make the characters instantly memorable, and they stand out boldly on reading the book: Stewart and Nicholls, the contrasting officers Joey meets on the British side; drunken Ted Narracott; crazy Friedrich on the German side. "It's good for us," says Stafford, "that there are some really strong characters in the book." It's necessary for Stafford to build vivid prose vignettes into complex, lasting through-lines. He expands characters to give them more time in the eyes of the audience, so that they have their own developing stories in the background of Joey's journey. He adds a few of his own, like Sergeant Thunder, who guides the troops when they arrive at Calais. But "every major event and character originates from the book," he says.

One difficulty is to keep hold of Albert while we are simultaneously following Joey. In the book, Joey is able to remember Albert; but our puppet horse's thoughts aren't shared, and we find ourselves seeing the war from Albert's point of view too. This bond is one of the reasons for our strong feelings for both characters. As Morpurgo explains:

Affection for an animal can be very intense, for children growing up on a farm alone. This boy's affection for this foal, who he comes across and looks after – and let's remember, he was an only child – represents the kind of friendship and respect that develop between a country boy, a country girl, and the animals around.

In the novel, Marianne Elliott remembers, "the love story between Albert and Joey was really compelling." On stage, this side of Albert's story is combined with his own journey through the war – the character distinguished in both stories with what Stafford describes as "absolute single-minded loyalty and devotion".

*Mervyn Millar is a puppeteer and a member of the War Horse company. His book *The Horse's Mouth*, published by Oberon in association with the NT, describes the process of putting War Horse on stage for the first time.*

Resources

Extract 2 from Mervyn Millar's *The Horse's Mouth*

At a read-through before the March 2007 workshop that runs to two-and-a-half hours, Marianne Elliott (one of the co-directors) estimates a length of four hours with all the visual sequences included. We're aiming for under three, including the interval. The pressure is on to find ways of compressing the action. (Nick) Stafford – the adapter, (Marianne) Elliott and (Tom) Morris – the co-directors – are aware of two essential needs: to find the threads of symbolism, character and mood that will lead the audience through the story; and to be unsentimental in the work of removing sections that hold up the pace or become redundant to a stage version of the story. The rehearsal draft is number 8.5 – and Stafford is still on hand during rehearsals, amending, adjusting, and providing rewrites as necessary.

From the middle of 2006, doubts are emerging about whether the French auction at the end of the war has enough to sustain an audience who have just watched the emotional reunion of Albert and Joey. It's the beginning of the discussion about whether to end the story sooner than Morpurgo does in the novel. This decision springs from a desire to make a satisfying shape for the end of the evening in the theatre, but it has ramifications backward in the story – if we don't have this event, then what is the purpose of the young girl, Emilie? Morris and Handspring have always had an instinct that Emilie will be a human character played by a puppet. This suggests that her role in the stage production is more than narrative; she carries a symbolic charge, offers a shorthand to the audience that she and Joey share an innocence and simplicity that exists outside the difficult wartime social politics that affect her mother or the soldiers. Emilie is able to remind us what Albert was like before he entered the war. These changes develop the character of Emilie for the stage production; even more than other characters, her role in the stage version alters from that in the book – and her character grows and emerges to fit.



Joey meets the tank
PHOTO: SIMON ANNAND

Resources

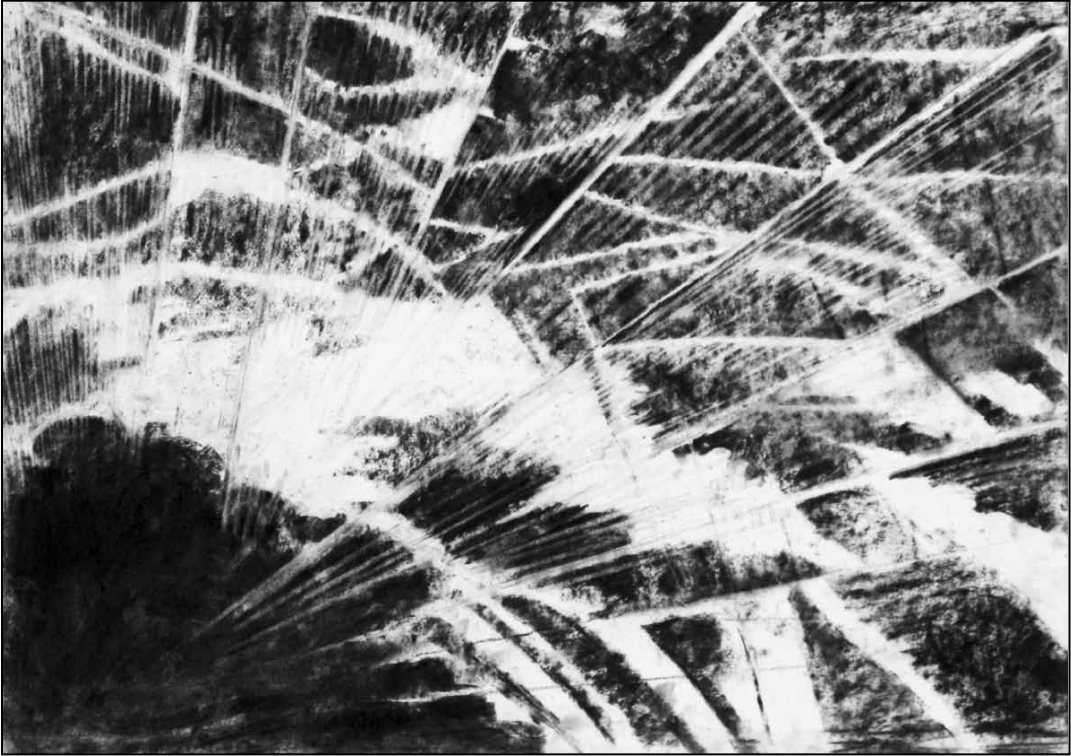
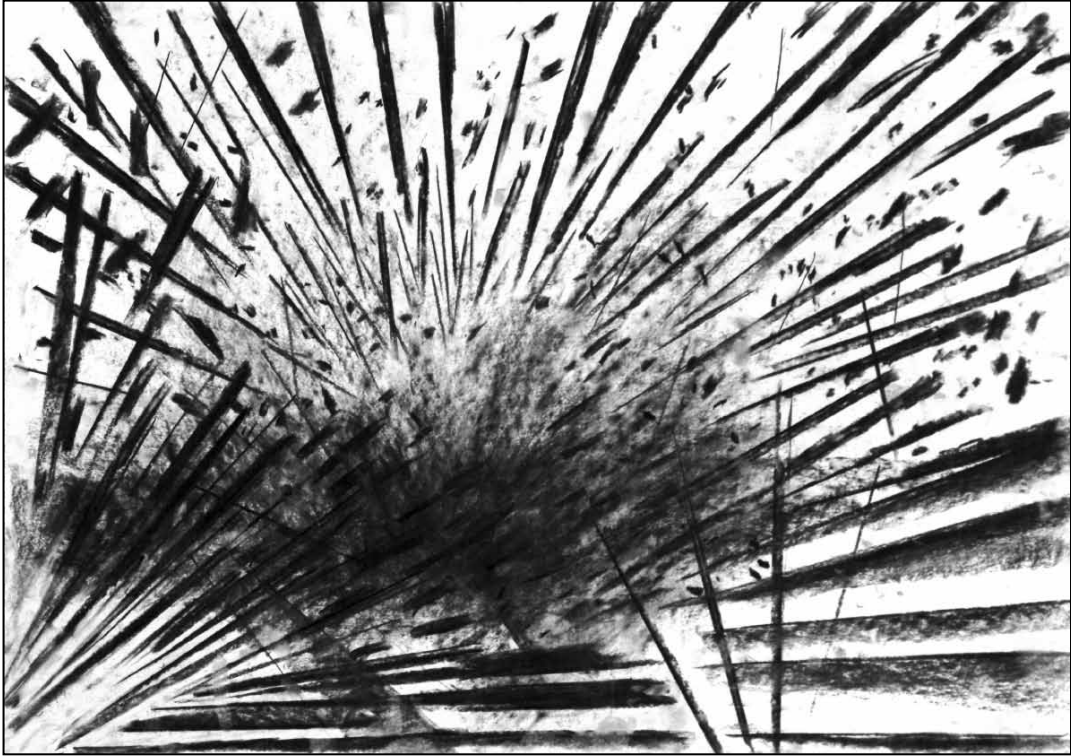
“Puppet and Character Work” extracted from page 17 in this education pack

Because so much of the story was reliant on believing and caring about the horses, a huge amount of rehearsal time was devoted to researching the behaviour of the real-life animals and working out how best we might translate that into our puppet work. Tom Morris, one of the directors, was particularly adamant that we avoid any traces of sentimentality or anthropomorphism (‘humanising’ or reading human traits into animal behaviour) when dealing with the horses: we were going to portray them as if they were absolutely real. That’s why at times during the show you might see the horses whinnying or making noise at seemingly dramatically inappropriate or sensitive moments; like real horses, our puppets give the sense that they are pursuing their own agenda rather than tuning too unnaturally into what is going on in the human world. That said, we were still keen to make sure that our horses had their own distinct character, and much time was spent with the Joey and Tophorn puppeteers drawing up lists of characteristics and tendencies that they felt were manifested in their respective horses. These lists were displayed in the room to remind us of the kind of customers we were dealing with in the horse scenes. Basil and Adrian from Handspring were on hand throughout the rehearsal process to ensure that the way the actors were dealing with the puppets helped to make them seem like real horses. We were all astonished to discover quite how much of a puppet’s authenticity is dependent not on the puppeteer inside but on how the other actors in the space behave around the puppet.

by Polly Findlay, Staff Director on the 2007 production of War Horse

Resources

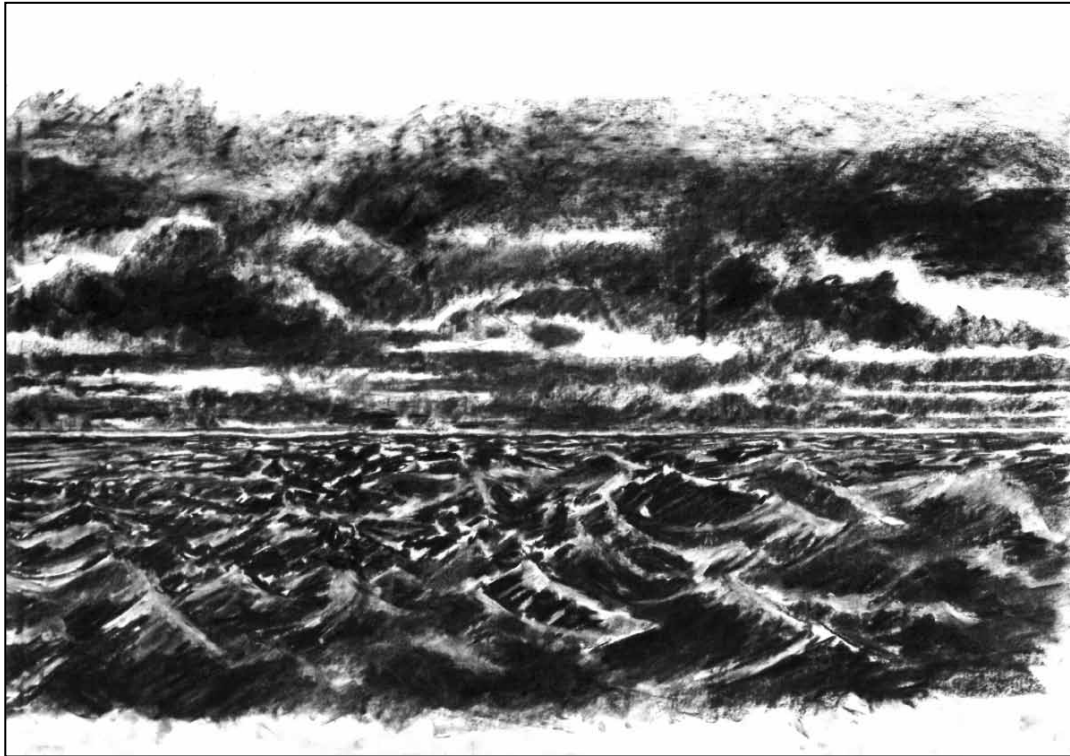
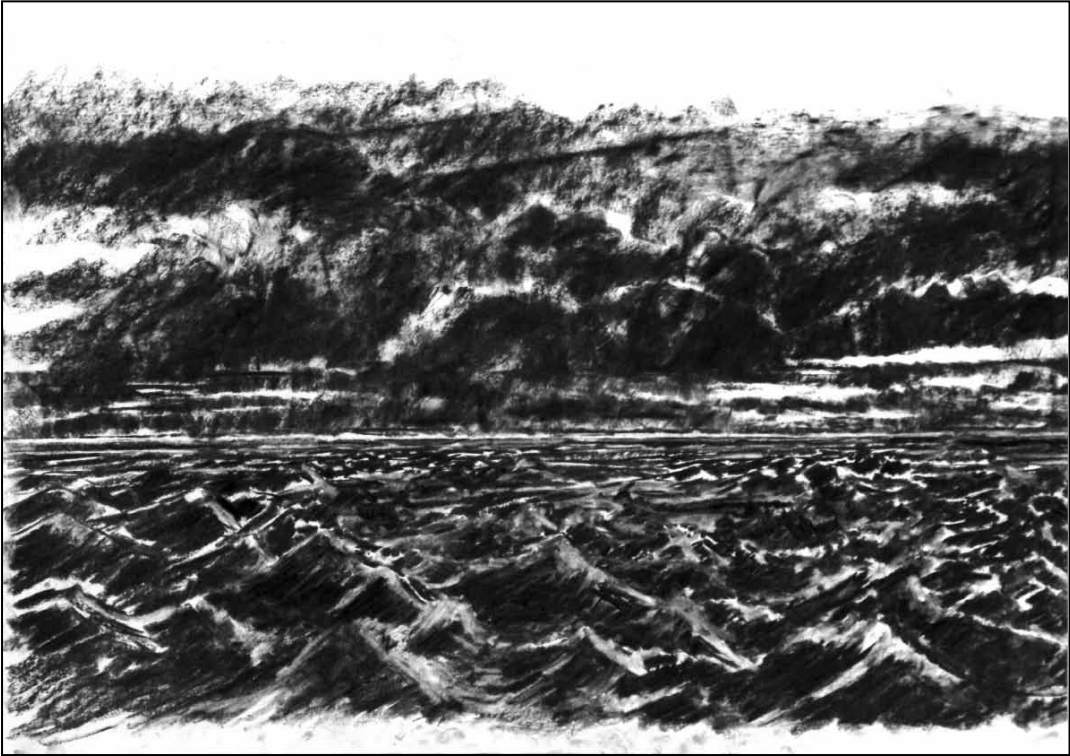
Rae Smith's drawings – the backdrop to the production



Drawings (Vorticist skyscapes) by Rae Smith

Resources

Rae Smith's drawings – the backdrop to the production



Drawings (Night-time Crossing) by Rae Smith

Resources

Rae Smith's drawings – the backdrop to the production



Drawing (The Narracotts' Farm) by Rae Smith



Drawing (poppies) by Rae Smith

Resources

How lighting is used on stage in *War Horse*



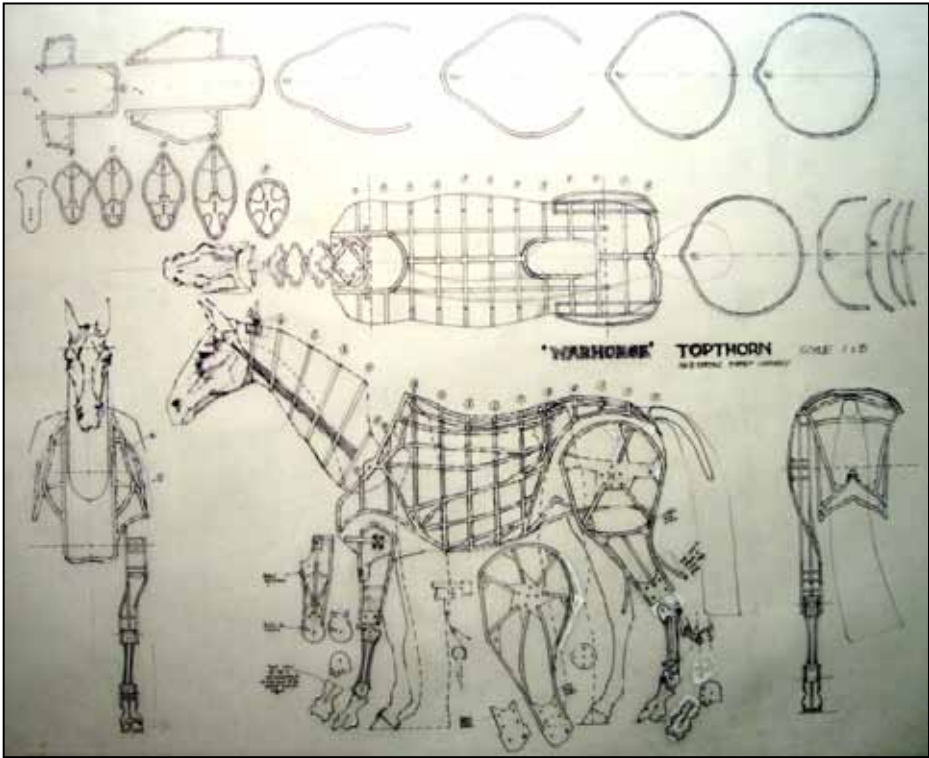
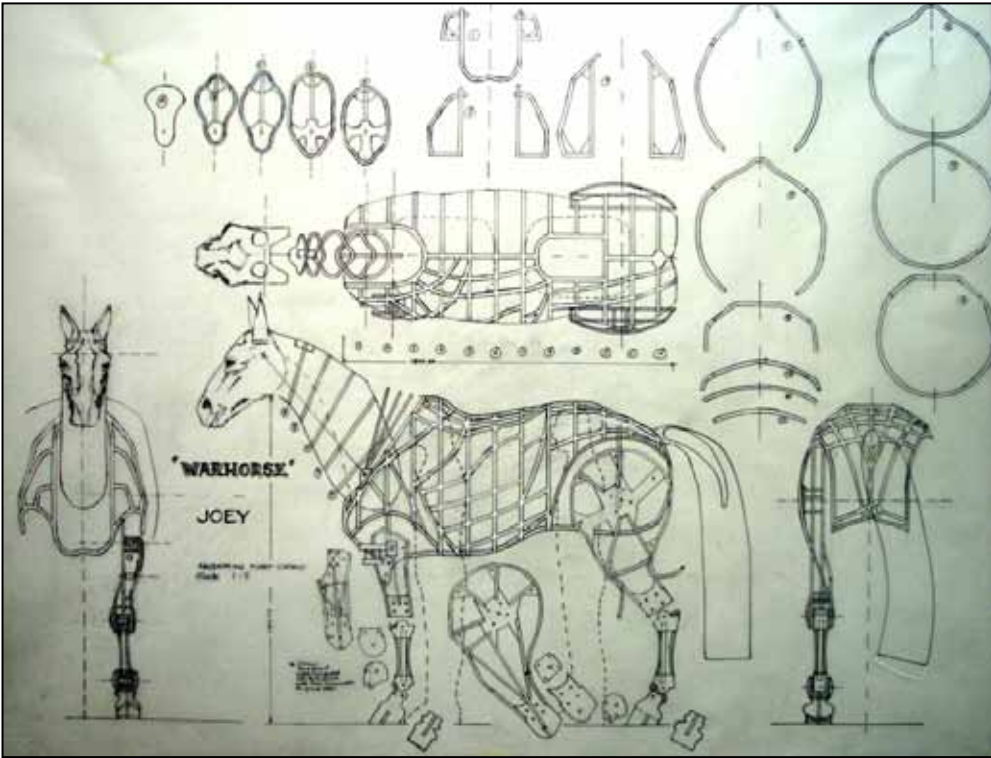
Joey and Tophorn



Joey
PHOTOS: SIMON ANNAND

Resources

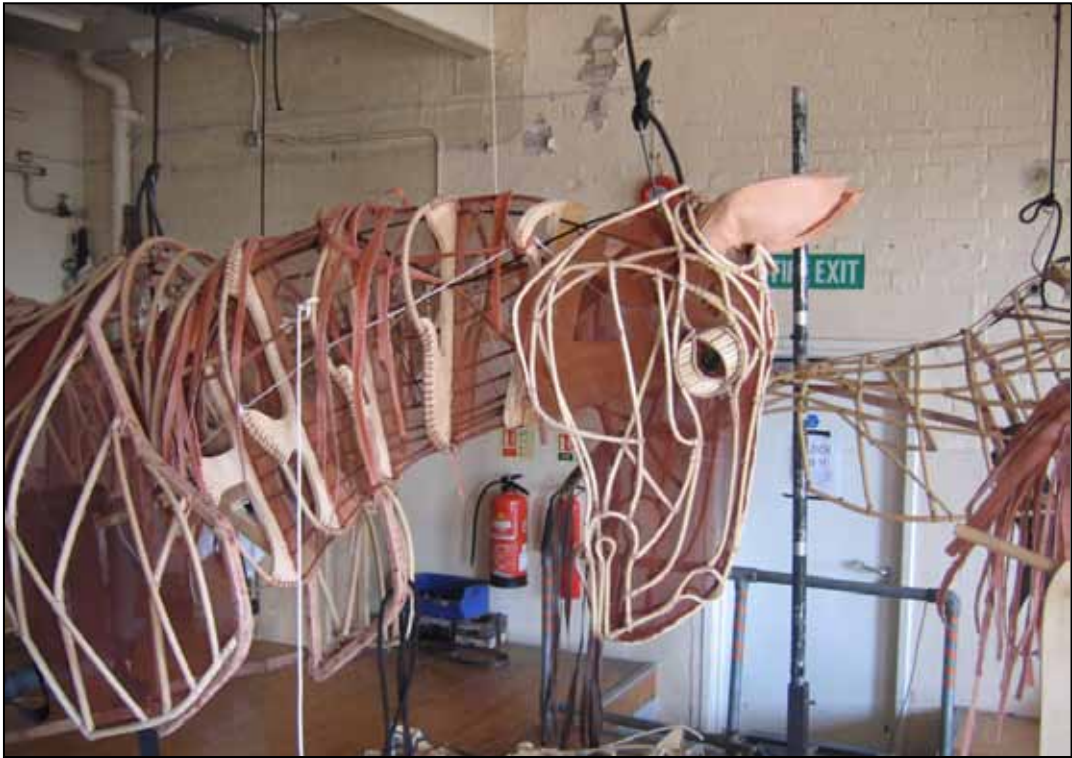
Adrian Kohler's drawings of his puppet designs



Adrian Kohler's technical drawings for Joey and Tophorn

Resources

Mervyn Millar's photos of the puppet prototypes



Joey's mother



The prototype for Joey for the 2006 workshop hanging in the NT Studio
PHOTOS: MERVYN MILLAR

Merchandise and multimedia resources



FROM THE NATIONAL'S BOOKSHOP:

War Horse

by former Children's Laureate, Michael Morpurgo. £5.99

War Horse – The Play

Nick Stafford's stage adaptation of the novel. £8.99

The Horse's Mouth

Mervyn Millar's unique perspective as a member of the creative team and a puppeteer gives an extraordinary insight into the way this stage version of Michael Morpurgo's novel takes audiences on a journey through history. A new updated edition is now available. £12.99. Published by the National Theatre and Oberon Books.

War Horse t-shirts

at £14.99, and other merchandise

The War Horse programme

priced £4, includes an exclusive article by Michael Morpurgo; Nick Stafford reveals some of his research into German-occupied France during WW1; Robert Butler talks to Rae Smith and discusses the Art of War Horse; Max Hastings writes about the "forgotten heroes" in WWI; and there are many beautiful photographs of the puppets and actors in the production. The programme for the West End production is available at the New London Theatre, priced at £4.

Making War Horse DVD (2009)

£10.99. From its early development in the NT Studio, see how Handspring Puppet Company created the groundbreaking techniques that brought a lifelike horse to the stage. Behind the scenes and into the rehearsal room, featuring interviews with the cast and creative team, the award-winning DVD *Making War Horse* documents this unique theatrical collaboration and the creation of a stage classic.

War Horse – CD soundtrack of the production

£11.99. Music by Adrian Sutton & songs by John Tams.

Plus other titles by Michael Morpurgo, and a book about Handspring Puppet Company.

Order from www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

T +44 (0)20 7452 3456

E bookshop@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Prices correct at the time of publication, autumn 2011.

Merchandise and multimedia resources

This linkable list of online content may enhance learning on the themes and historical context of *War Horse*.

➔ NATIONAL THEATRE LEARNING

Horse Power, an interactive WW1 map that can be used in a classroom on a whiteboard, or online.

➔ iTunesU

A repository for the National's digital resources for the production of *War Horse*.

➔ THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

holds a substantial collection of World War One memorabilia, footage, sound recordings. Visit the fascinating First World War 'trench experience'. Their book, *The Animals' War*, by historian Juliet Gardiner, is a remarkable insight into the crucial role played by all sorts of animals – horses included – in times of war.

➔ IWM Collections

Archive of six million photographs, film and sound recordings spanning the past century. This archive offers valuable visual context for the war years.

➔ Database of downloadable learning resources.

Search by Key Stage or events & themes.

There are six types:

1. Historical Notes
2. Personal Stories
3. Source Packs
4. Teaching Activities
5. Itineraries
6. Source Enquiries

Online and interactive exhibitions:

- ➔ 1. The Somme Revealed: Personal Stories behind the longest and costliest land battle in British history.
- ➔ 2. The Falklands Conflict: Explore it through eyewitness accounts and personal artefacts of those involved.
- ➔ 3. One in Five: Explores the impact of WW2 on the lives of contemporary Britons.
- ➔ 4. What Lies Beneath: Focuses on the experience of ordinary people living through the Cold War.
- ➔ 5. People of the Great War: How did WW1 shape the modern world?

➔ HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY

Learn more about this extraordinary South African Puppet Company

➔ NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Online Exhibitions on a huge range of topics including the Black and Asian British Army, The Western Front 1918, Wives and Sweethearts and D-Day and the Battle for Normandy.

➔ **Downloadable learning resources** for Primary, Secondary, Further and higher groups on all wars including many on the Great Wars

➔ **Collection Highlights:** watch videos about selected objects from the Museum's extensive collection including a group of WW2 medals

➔ BBC HISTORY

Articles: extensive textual guide to the causes, events, people and consequences of WW1 by leading academics in the field

➔ **Virtual Tours of the Trenches:** six virtual tours of different aspects of the trenches including an aircraft fight over the trenches

➔ **Animations of WW1 Soldiers' Lives:** 6 different animated versions of life on the Western Front

➔ **Wilfred Owen Audio Gallery:** Audio excerpts from Owen's poems and letters home to his mother, written whilst at the Front

➔ **Soldiers' Stories Audio Gallery:** Listen to excerpts from the letters and diaries of soldiers on the Western Front

The National Theatre is not responsible for the content provided on these linked websites.

Merchandise and multimedia resources



THE FIRST WORLD WAR DIARY OF GEORGE CULPITT

Diary: A personal, in-depth look at one soldier's experience of the war. Culpitt joined up at 18 in 1916 and kept a diary for the next two years. The whole diary can be downloaded from the website. There are also key snippets from the diary, separated into 'People & Places', 'Army Life' & 'Fighting'



THE FIRST WORLD WAR POETRY DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Film and Audio Clips: Over 150 downloadable clips inc. original footage from 1916-1918 and audio interviews with veterans



Interactive Timelines: Correlate major events of WW1 and the lives of the major war poets



Mindmaps: Visual representations of the events, people and places of WW1. Download interactive mindmaps on all major war poets or key poems using free software



Online Tutorials: Suitable for KS4 students and above, these seminars introduce students to war poetry as a genre, particular poets and poems, manuscript studies and textual analysis



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Document Packs: Viewable key sources for the Origins of the War, Women and the First World War and The Eastern Front, 1914 – 1917 eg translated excerpts from the German 'White Book' detailing the case for war:



Glossary: Key terms throughout the website are highlighted in blue and a click takes you to a helpful explanation/definition:



LINCOLN CENTER THEATRE

Resource Guide: Guide to the creation of the production, the context of both the War and specifically the use of horses and suggestions of relevant classroom activities. Please note that the guide focuses on American involvement in WWI and on the American version of the production:



OTHER SITES

An extensive list and guide to additional resources available



Very thorough list of all WWI physical collections including up-to-date news of new collections and online resources:

The National Theatre is not responsible for the content provided on these linked websites.

Feedback

We hope you have found this National Theatre education pack useful to your experience and study of *War Horse*.

Your comments – positive or otherwise – on the content of this pack are valuable to us. Please spare a brief moment to complete our *War Horse* education pack survey:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?hl=en_GB&formkey=dHIkY0IXeFBnbjUwSTJ0M1BkeEFVdIE6MQ#gid=0

(opens in a new window)