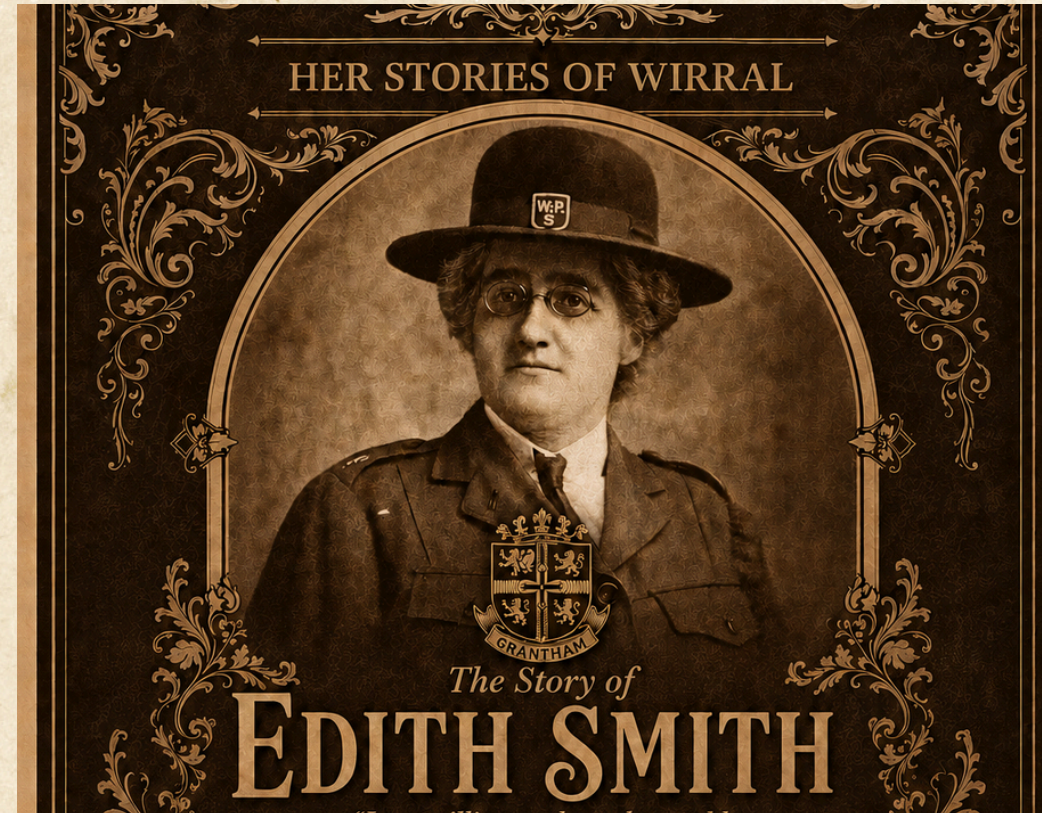


THE STORY OF EDITH SMITH

PRESENTED BY OXTON
PLAYWRIGHTS CIC

TEACHERS OVERVIEW

Pupils explore evidence, discuss change and create thoughtful responses that connect local history to their own lives.



Big idea: history is not only found in textbooks. It is found in streets, workplaces, graves, plaques and stories passed back into the community.

Suitable for -

KS2: Years 5–6 with guided tasks
KS3: Years 7–9 with extended enquiry
Flexible for mixed ability groups

Purpose

Introduce pupils to Edith Smith through local history, women's history and creative response. The pack can be used before or after seeing the performance, or as a standalone classroom resource.

Wellbeing Thread

With Wirral Mind input, the pack includes safe reflection prompts about courage, pressure, support, confidence and community.

SAFE LEARNING AND WELLBEING

Before you begin

Set a respectful tone. Remind pupils that everyone responds to stories differently and that they can pass on any question.

During discussion

Use careful language. Encourage pupils to listen, avoid personal pressure and focus on historical evidence and empathy.

After the activity

End with a grounding reflection: one thing learned, one question, and one trusted person or place pupils can go to for support.

Some themes in Edith's story may open conversations about pressure, fairness, responsibility and being the first to do something difficult.

WHO IS EDITH SMITH?



- Born in Oxton, Wirral, Edith Smith's story links local places to national change.
- She is remembered as Britain's first female police constable with full powers of arrest.
- Before policing, Edith lived a working life that included family responsibility and public service.
- During the First World War, she served in Grantham at a time when women's roles were changing quickly.
- Her story can help pupils think about courage, work, public life, gender expectations and legacy.

CURRICULUM LINKS

History

Local history study
Chronology and change over time
Significance and legacy
Using sources as evidence
Women's roles and the First World War

English

Reading non-fiction and historical context
Writing diary entries, speeches and monologues
Speaking, listening and structured discussion
Making inferences from evidence

Drama

Freeze frames and hot-seating
Role, voice and point of view
Confidence, communication and teamwork
Equality, public service and challenging stereotypes

PHSE

Courage and resilience
Support networks
Respectful listening
Challenging stereotypes
Recognising pressure and asking for help

ACTIVITY ONE - LOCAL HISTORY

Starter

Show pupils a local plaque, building, street name or grave.
Ask: "What story might this place be hiding?"

Main Task

Create a "history map" of Edith's story. Mark Oxton, Grantham, Liverpool, Runcorn and any places connected to pupils' own communities

Plenary

One-minute reflection: "History feels closer when..." Pupils complete the sentence and share.

ACTIVITY TWO - WOMEN, WORK AND PUBLIC LIFE

Discussion Prompts

- What jobs were women expected to do in the early 1900s?
- Why might policing have been seen as unsuitable for women?
- How did the First World War change ideas about work?
- What challenges might Edith have faced?

Debate Statement

“The First World War changed women’s lives forever.”

Wellbeing Prompt

What support might someone need when they are challenging expectations or stepping into a new role?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

KS2

Write a diary entry as Edith on her first day in post.

Create a poster celebrating her public service.

Write a postcard from Grantham to Oxton.

KS3

Write a monologue from Edith's point of view.

Write a newspaper article announcing her appointment.

Write a speech explaining why Edith should be remembered.

Reflection sentence starters

One value Edith showed was...

One challenge she may have faced was...

One thing I can do when I need support is...

CREATIVE PROJECT: FROM STORY TO STAGE

Choose a person, place or event from local history. Turn it into creative sharing.

Research

Find sources: images, names, places, dates, memories or newspaper references.

Choose

Decide the central question: why does this story matter now?

Shape

Create a monologue, scene, poster, soundscape or exhibition label.

Share

Perform or display your work for another class, families or a community audience.

ADAPTING AND REFLECTION

One thing I learned about Edith...

One question I still have...

One way theatre can help history...

Pupils use evidence, explain significance, connect local and national history, and communicate a viewpoint creatively.

FINAL THOUGHT - Pupils use evidence, explain significance, connect local and national history, and communicate a viewpoint creatively and safely.



Exploring History

THANK YOU OXTON PLAYWRIGHTS CIC