

## West Buckland School interviews

Students and teachers who went to Gallipoli were interviewed on the journey home. These are some extracts.

### Students

#### Seb Busselle (16)

**Knowledge and understanding:** I was amazed how bogged down it became – almost a copy of the Western Front despite the fact that it was planned as a war of manoeuvre.

**About the Turkish perspective (i.e. attitudes):** They do portray us as the Bad Guys but I don't think they hold a grudge against us because I think they understand that we lost a lot of people too.

**Understanding from the trip:** 'Westernised'? I don't like that term. I think it sounds almost a bit offensive in a way: the 'civilised' West and the 'uncivilised' rest.

#### Ben Unwin (14)

**Knowledge and understanding:** One thing I found really interesting was the story of 'the 15 year old midshipman [Metcalf at Anzac Cove]. He had to step up, at only 15. He had to tell people that were so much older than him what to do. He had been given a force to land. He kept panicking about the fortress at the end [Gabatepe] and how they might cut all his men down, so he just kept drifting and turning away, changing the landing zone quite a lot, but still managing to get them on without losing many of them.

**Knowledge and understanding:** It was a massacre. It made me feel a little bit annoyed at the incompetence of the commanders.

**About the Turkish perspective (i.e. attitudes):** The propaganda in the museum made [the Turkish people] think that we're a lot worse than we actually are.

#### Issy Fincher (15)

**K&U; Engagement:** I really liked the visit to [Backhouse] bunker – you know, the hospital underground. You can just visualise it happening and, like, people coming in and out of this bunker; and the trenches all over the place.

**About the Turkish perspective:** The Turkish were good fighters. They really know how to defend their country, from what I've seen. They were very proud of what they did. They were quite forgiving towards the Australians and New Zealanders; I'm not sure about us! From the video it didn't make the British out to be that good: the British were the ones that actually started the invasion, the Australians and New Zealanders came along for the ride. The Turkish students were very different: they were really nice. I don't think it's, like, kept on. They're quite modern.

**Corporal Seyit:** He was just, like, so in the moment. He was just so passionate about his country that he would just be willing to do anything for it.

#### Elliot Smith (15)

**Knowledge and understanding:** I knew there were campaigns here but I didn't actually know that we lost against the Turks.

**Knowledge and understanding:** I've been able to paint a mental picture of what actually happened.

**About the Turkish perspective (i.e. attitudes):** The films [in the Kabatepe Museum] were more on the Turkish side and for the Turkish people and I guess you could say they kind of discriminated against the English.

**About the Turkish perspective (i.e. attitudes):** It was really good to get a viewpoint from people our age in Turkey – a good way to understand.

**Knowledge and understanding:** I have a greater knowledge of the subject and whenever I think of Turkey I can always think of this trip and I can remember this memory and this part of the world as well, and think about the great sacrifice that the soldiers made in World War I in this part of the world.

### **Lydia Clements (17)**

**Knowledge and understanding:** I didn't realise we'd lost. Because usually in history it's about us winning .. and this was the complete opposite and it was just mind-blowing. It was the immense sacrifice of the boys and the lack of quality leadership that caused such pain and suffering.

**K&U; Attitudes:** The most important bit for me was 'going to the cemeteries, just to see the plaques, the gravestones. I liked reading the inscriptions on the graves: 'He died so that we may live' – things like that. They were just personal to the soldier and it gives you a better of who they were as a person and what their family thought about them. I liked the fact that [the graves] all looked the same pretty much, because of the regimental structure that they had, and to see the vast number.'

**Attitudes (Turkish perspective):** I thought it was really interesting how high they hold themselves for this one battle. There's obviously a lot of sour feelings towards us, still. We've got a couple of international students at our school and I never realised how bad it might be for them [in another country].

### **Rudi Small (16)**

**K&U, Attitudes:** The soldier I researched was killed by a sniper when on sentry duty just after midnight on 8<sup>th</sup> November (my own birthday). It was quite emotional [being at his graveside]. When you're researching the person it's quite sort of objective; you're just looking at it on paper and there's no connection, whereas when you go to the grave you see him amongst all the other soldiers and you feel as though you've travelled thousands of miles to go and see that person, to go and commemorate their life and the sacrifice they made so it's quite emotional: we've travelled across the world to see that.

**K&U:** I'm really interested in the Turkish political system now. It's interesting thinking about Atatürk and how Turkey has sort of drifted away from [his principles]. .. A lot of people round here are saddened by the fact that the AKP has .. gone back to a more religious mindset, sort of blurring religion and politics, whereas Atatürk wanted to veer away from that.

**K&U:** I've learnt about a different way of life and how these people handle their problems today in comparison to how we do and how the Gallipoli Campaign possibly affected that.

### **Will Johnson (15)**

(Will is in the Combined Cadet Force and is planning to join the army)

**K&U:** It's very interesting to see the difference in tactics. They would just rush across a line whereas now it's very safe; you fight from as far away as possible because that increases the chance of you surviving the conflict.

**K&U:** We even saw a small number of 'desertion' gravestones. But I can't really blame them. When you can see that everyone's being cut down around you, it's fight or flight and they chose flight. I can't see that's necessarily wrong.

**K&U:** It's much better to know things first hand than perhaps put it into the internet and then get someone else's opinion, because if you can formulate your own you won't have to incorporate someone else's bias into that. We've seen British perspectives (through the guide) but we've also seen the Turkish perspective through the very fancy museum they've built.

**About meeting the Turkish students.** They don't think negatively that our great grandfathers came here and killed their great grandfathers – it's not like that. It's more that this place has a very rich heritage and they want to share it with us. All the same, they're very aware that the British Empire was vast – larger than their own Ottoman Empire – but at the same time they pushed us back very effectively. They don't rub it in your face but when you mention it they have a wry smile as if to say yes, they know that they beat us.

## Teachers

### Amanda Willmott

What I have learnt coming to Gallipoli is all the statues, all the commemorations focus on the sense of friendship and forgiveness and peace and the bonding of cultures, and societies and enemies as friends and I think if there's a positive legacy of what happened here, that's what it is. Personally, I want to be able to find some reason for what happened and for me that's the only thing I can see that's in any way positive.

### Chris Allin

**Learning outcomes:** The museum trip was one of the stand-out things, firstly from the historical interpretation point of view – the way the Turkish government presents the Campaign, even the causes. The Allies are referred to as the warmongers. It makes you question your whole delivery of the topic; you like to feel you're not being subjective when you're teaching students the causes of the war. You think you've got the evidence and suddenly you go to a presentation like that and you start to wonder.

**Learning outcomes:** The enquiry skills when [the students] had to go round the museum to find an artefact. The students were using their context there. They'd built up some knowledge of Gallipoli and they were using that to identify an object and then talk about it. It was great.

**Learning outcomes:** You encouraged them to do some personal research for the eulogies. They knew that they would have to present that information in front of the group and it motivated them to find out a little bit more.

**Learning outcomes:** There was lots of interaction – as you can see they're just having a very meaningful discussion about the political situation.

**Learning outcomes:** Their attitudes have definitely been changed – even my own – about Muslim countries. These students will find out that the only way to get rid of ignorance is to actually travel around and meet people from other countries. It's obvious isn't it. Otherwise you're just depending on the media.

**Learning outcomes:** This has encouraged them 'not to jump to assumptions, but to actually weigh up the evidence and delve a bit deeper'.

**Fitting in to the curriculum.** Two old boys of the school died at Gallipoli. 'In our curriculum at Year 9 we do the First World War so we'll be able to use the photos, the experiences and the eulogies as a fantastic resource for the students. We'll ensure that Gallipoli will continue to be part of the history curriculum.'

**Value of the trip.** Having done maybe twelve overseas trips over the years – to Germany, to Poland, to Russia – I just feel that the educational experience the students have had here has been the most varied and stimulating. It's been fantastic: getting to meet the [Turkish] historian; going to the local school; meeting someone from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; visiting the Turkish museum. The students won't forget the stories they've heard, and the local context – people from North Devon whose footsteps they have followed, and appreciating the sacrifice of those young men.

**Alice Clutterbuck**

**Learning outcomes:** The students had an intensely experiential view of Gallipoli. They may already have had an intellectual knowledge, including things they've read about the Campaign but this has brought it to life for them. It's made them question and look at all viewpoints – the Turkish view, the Anzac view, the British view.

**Learning outcomes:** I think the students will have a more open minded view and they've clearly been fascinated and informed by the politics. I think it's opened their minds. It's made them appreciate everything they have and the freedoms they have. They obviously wanted to learn more about the diversity of religion; with the rise of ISIS, they want to know what's happening and how the Turkish people themselves feel about the current situation.