

# Information for teachers

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## Efforts and Ideals: Prints of the First World War

(An exhibition of prints organized by the government War Propaganda Bureau in 1917)

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A. S. Hartrick, *On the Railways: Engine and Carriage Cleaners*. Women's Work portfolio in *The Great War, Britain's Efforts and Ideals*, 1917  
(Amgueddfa Cymru)

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## What are these prints?

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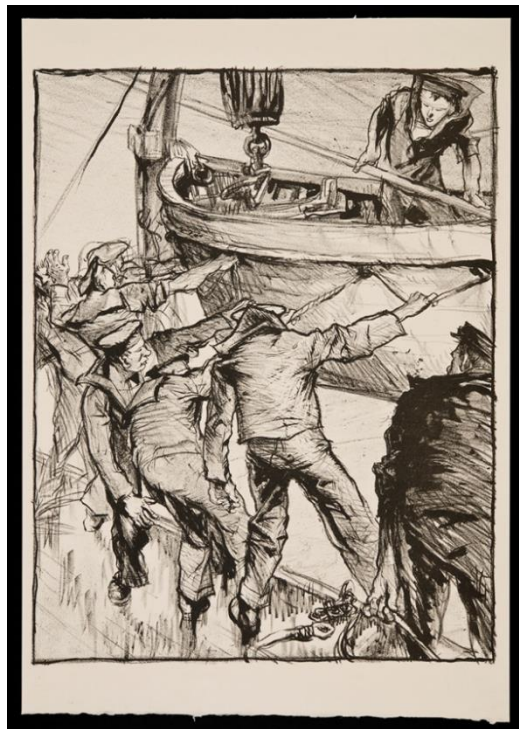


- They are 66 prints commissioned by the Ministry of Information in 1917 and exhibited around the country.
- Several sets of the prints were produced and given to just a handful of art galleries and museums.
- This complete set of prints was presented to the National Museum of Wales in 1919.`

## What was the Ministry of Information?

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- In 1914 the government set up an organization called the War Propaganda Bureau, Wellington House under Charles Masterman to oversee British propaganda at home and overseas.
- This organization went through several changes and was eventually called the Ministry of Information.
- Most propaganda produced was very subtle as this was considered the most effective way of appealing to the British public.



## What is propaganda and why were these prints produced?

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**Propaganda** can be described as information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

It is important to consider Britain's situation in 1917 when analysing the reasons why the government produced this collection of prints.

- Millions of men had been sent to fight on the battlefields.
- Hundreds of thousands of people were working in industries that were essential to power the war machine.
- The public had already endured years of hardship, trauma and loss.

The strain of such a long and difficult war was beginning to show in worrying levels of unrest among the people of Britain.

- There were severe food shortages as German U-boats destroyed ships transporting food to Britain.
- Factory workers fed up with food shortages began a series of 'walk outs'.
- The public were concerned about the threats from Zeppelins and air raids.
- The French army was becoming more unhappy and in May and June 30,000 men were involved in mutinies on the front line.

## How can you use these prints?

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### Discover more about the artists

These lithographic prints were made by some of the most famous artists working during the First World War. They provide an opportunity to examine material designed for a very specific purpose, and compare this with the wider art portfolios of artists such as C. R. W. Nevinson and Sir Frank Brangwyn.

### Compare with other First World War art

Amgueddfa Cymru holds significant artworks relating to the First World War such as:

- Sir Frank Brangwyn's *A Tank in Action* ([www.museumwales.ac.uk/art/online/?action=show\\_item&item=140](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/art/online/?action=show_item&item=140))
- Lucy Kemp-Welch's *Big Guns to the Front* (on display in the Main Hall of National Museum Cardiff).

This is an opportunity to examine how war is portrayed in these paintings and to compare this with the depiction of war in the Efforts and Ideals prints.

## **Finding out about propaganda**

This print portfolio is a good starting point for exploring the work of the War Propaganda Bureau (Ministry of Information) in the First World War. The National Library of Wales holds rare written material produced by the Ministry. (<http://cymruww1.llgc.org.uk/2013/08/15/a-trench-raid/>)

## **Compare with other contemporary resources**

Take a look at the work of writers and poets of the time, such as Hedd Wyn, Robert Graves and Rupert Brooke. How did they portray the First World War through a different art form?

## **Take one theme**

For example 'women's work', and explore in more depth with specific reference to the experiences of women in Wales using material from other sources.

The People's Collection Wales: [www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk](http://www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk)

Amgueddfa Cymru article: [www.museumwales.ac.uk/2392/](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/2392/))

## Who were the artists who made the prints?

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Some very famous artists of the period contributed to the portfolio, such as Augustus John, Sir Frank Brangwyn and C. R. W. Nevinson.

You can read their biographies in the document *Efforts and Ideals: Prints of the First World War. The Artists. Information for Teachers.*



Self Portrait  
Augustus John  
(1878-1961)  
(Amgueddfa Cymru)

## What are lithographs?

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- All the prints on display are lithographs.
- Lithography is a printing technique based on the principle that oil and water repel.
- An artist draws an image onto a smooth surface, usually a limestone, with an oil-based material.
- The surface is dampened with water, the water is repelled by the oily drawing and settles in the unmarked areas.
- Paper is laid down on the stone and run through a press.
- For colour lithographs, the artist begins with the design on a key-stone, then each further colour requires a different stone.
- The printing was carried out under the direction of the artist F. Ernest Jackson at Avenue Press. He liaised with the artists, guided artists such as Clausen who were new to the process and provided proofs.
- Jackson, along with Hartrick, was one of a small group of artists who in 1909 set up the Senefelder Club, a small club to encourage and revive artistic lithography. It was named after the 18th-century German inventor of the process.
- This portfolio was produced at a time of a revival of interest in the artistic opportunities of lithography.

**‘The most brilliant of the younger men are all now making remarkable lithographs ... there is a genuine renaissance of the art’ (Joseph Pennell, 1914)**

## How were the prints conserved?

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The prints in this portfolio date from 1917 and, after so many years of storage, it was important for the prints to be conserved to enable them to be displayed and to protect them for the future. This delicate and skilled process has been recorded by the conservators in a blog on our website (<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/blog/?cat=2364>).



Close up of foxing spots on Ready for the Sea by Muirhead Bone, 1917.

Washing the prints to remove foxing spots.



## More information

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See our learning and public events programme at  
[www.museumwales.ac.uk/first\\_world\\_war/](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/first_world_war/)