

# An Introduction

Unparalleled in its influence on the people of the UK, no other periods in history have left a more significant mark than World War 1 and World War 2. These wars changed the fabric of daily life across numerous towns and cities, and the borough of Barking and Dagenham was certainly no exception.

## What you need to know

In the summer of 1914, when World War 1 erupted, the world underwent a profound transformation. Following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, tensions between nations escalated, leading to the formation of two opposing factions: the Allies and the Central Powers. Among the Allies, Britain stood resolute, calling for men from places like Barking and Dagenham to join the fight. Tragically, over 300 men from the area lost their lives during the war, leaving an indelible impact on their families back home.

In the aftermath of the war, a national Remembrance Day was established, now observed every year on November 11th. Towns and cities erected statues and other war memorials, often commemorating heroic figures like Job Drain from Dagenham or listing the names of the fallen.

However, Britain faced a pressing housing crisis post-war. Numerous people resided in what we now recognise as slums—congested streets and dwellings that were unhygienic and detrimental to people's health. To address this problem, a massive building initiative was undertaken, often referred to as the "Homes for Heroes" campaign.

The Becontree estate emerged as a monumental accomplishment, destined to span a vast expanse of 4 square miles, accommodating a staggering population of up to 120,000 individuals. Streets were clean and boasted ample space, while the houses offered desirable features like gardens and indoor bathrooms. The estate was regarded by many as a modern utopia. Stringent regulations were in place to maintain the area's impeccable appearance, and noteworthy figures, including King George V and Gandhi, graced the estate with their presence.

Just over 20 years later, Britain would be plunged into war once again when Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's Appeasement policy was ineffective in stopping Adolf Hitler's Germany from annexing neighbouring countries. The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 sparked the start of World War 2.

The first 8 months of the war, known as the Phoney War, were quiet as countries planned and prepared for what was to come. In Barking and Dagenham, children were evacuated, and air raid shelters were built.

As the war progressed, the people of Barking and Dagenham made great sacrifices, both at war and at home, to contribute to the war effort. Both wars brought out the bravery and the spirit of the people, but at a terrible price that would have long lasting effects.

## Resources

Our key enquiry questions, sources, PowerPoints, activities, and other resources will help to build children's understanding of the local area of Barking and Dagenham and answer the question 'What impact did the wars have on Barking and Dagenham?'

## Get in touch

Is there an area of local history you'd love to see on our Local History Hub?  
Get in touch to learn how we can work together! Email

[LocalHistory@tpet.co.uk](mailto:LocalHistory@tpet.co.uk)  
to find out more.



Teacher's Pet



Historic England



# Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.

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Historic England



Teacher's Pet

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## Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

## Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](https://www.tpet.co.uk) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](https://www.historicengland.org.uk) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.