

Dear young person,



This is a bit of a quiz! When you look at this photograph, what do you see? Three small metal objects – a bit unexciting? Yes absolutely. When I look at them though I see three of my most prized possessions. I treasure them; they are precious, perfect and beautiful to me.

At this time of year when the country is marking Remembrance Day on 11th November– it helps me with my remembering, I always take them down off the little display box and open them up. Yes... they open and all three contain. ? Can you think what? I'll give you a few clues.

First of all they originally belonged to my great-grandad who gave them to my grandad, his son, who then gave them to me. They are very old, were made in 1916 in France near the River Somme by my great-grandad. What is remarkable is that these little metal objects were not made in a workshop but on a battlefield from the plentiful objects found lying around.. The 'plentiful objects' lying around were spent shells and bullets recovered from the World War 1 trenches and battlefields. Many soldiers would while away the time before the next battle by writing home to loved ones or knitting (usually socks and scarves). Some soldiers like my great-grandad, used the shells and bullets to make small objects to send home. They were mainly shaped and carved by hand and what was a *useless* object became a *useful* object. What a positive thing to do!

Well back to my three precious objects and the clues.

The small brass cup object in the photograph was used regularly at my grand parents house. Whenever we played games like Snakes and Ladders or Ludo out would come the little brass cup and its contents. We couldn't play the games without it!

The little silver oval object opens around the middle. Inside are several much smaller items including a thimble. I have travelled around the world carrying this very handy tiny item. People always admire it and can't believe how clever it is.

The taller brass object, I have never used. It never really worked properly and for safety reasons we were not allowed to handle it. My grandad occasionally would take it down and try to light his cigar with it at Christmas.

These objects are now known as Trench Art. Objects made in the trenches by soldiers when they weren't fighting. You can see them on Antiques Road Show sometimes. They are now much sought after by collectors. I won't be parting with them for any amount of money. They are a small reminder of how from such a terrible situation as the Great War, something clever and creative can come. They are a reminder of my place in my family history.

The quiz 'answers' are on a separate piece of paper for you.

Best wishes

Laura



a shaker and two dice



a little sewing kit



a cigar lighter