Statue of Boer War Soldier
sculpted by Alan Herriot
Riversley Park, Nuneaton
Section 1 - ABOUT THE SCULPTURE

The statue at its unveiling 26 October 2008

Why the Statue was commissioned

In November 2006 one of Nuneaton’s most beloved statues was stolen and, unfortunately was never recovered.

The Boer War Memorial was a life size, bronze figure of a soldier from the Boer War.

Artist Alan Beattie Herriot was commissioned to make a replica, which you can see today in the Riversley Gardens outside Nuneaton Museum.
The original statue had been paid for by public donations collected through the Nuneaton Tribune, and was unveiled in 1905 by General Buller in front of a large crowd.

When the statue was stolen in 2006, there was a strong public reaction to the theft. A new appeal to raise funds for the replacement of the Boer War Soldier was launched through the Nuneaton Tribune. The appeal was led by a steering group made up of representatives from the ex-service community, NBBC and local businesses. The public responded generously and, with additional funding from the English Heritage War Memorial Foundation, in 2008, the process of commissioning took place.

First, a formal tender process took place, and Alan Herriot was the artist selected to create a new statue that would be a fitting tribute to the original statue.
We asked the artist – “How do you create a new piece of art that replicates the original?”

“My first task was to find out what the original statue looked like and if there were any photographs of it. The Boer War Memorial had several photographs some taken from close up and some taken from a distance.

These were very useful but sometimes it can be difficult to make out the detail on the statue and sometimes there are parts which don’t quite show themselves in the photographs. This is when it is important to research my subject so that I can be certain of historical accuracy when sculpting the soldier’s uniform, kit and weapons.”

How the statue was made

Step 1.
The first step is to make an armature which supports the clay, similar to the way our skeletons support our bodies. The armature is made from metal rods.
Step 2.
Next the clay is added and shaped to match the photographs. This is called modelling.

Step 3.
Once this is finished the next stage is to make moulds from which a wax replica of the clay statue can be taken.

Step 4.
The wax replica statue is then surrounded by plaster and the wax melted away leaving a space which is then filled with molten bronze.

Step 5.
After the plaster is removed the bronze statue which remains is then polished ready to be positioned on its base stone.
An Artist's Perspective – Alan Beattie Herriot

“It is important to create a statue as close to the original as is possible and careful consideration must be given to every detail from the overall size of the statue to the number of buttons on his uniform.

The sculptor feels a sense of pride and achievement when his work is complete.

When the piece is unveiled the positive reaction of the community makes the hard work worthwhile. In a sense the statue becomes part of his legacy.”

About the Artist

The artist, Alan Beattie Herriot DA ARBS graduated from Duncan of Jordonstone College of Art in 1974. He works in his Howgate studios near Edinburgh, in Scotland.

Alan’s sculptures portray characters from history, literature and legend. Modelling in clay allows him to work spontaneously to design forms which impart strength and durability to the finished bronze.

For over 20 years he has been making sculptural figures for the major Heritage Conservation bodies, the National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland as well as for organisations and individuals in Britain and Ireland, Holland and France.

He is currently working on a large equestrian bronze statue of Robert the Bruce, to be sited in Aberdeen.

To see more of Alan’s work you can visit his website www.alanherriot.com.
The Original Statue

Sculpted by Adolphus E.L. Rost.

Size of the figure: Bronze, 1.7m high x 60cm wide x 60cm deep.

The pedestal has a number of plaques attached, and the inscription on the main plaque reads:

“Erected to perpetuate the memory of the men of Nuneaton District who at the Call of Duty went forth to fight their Country’s battles in South Africa during the years 1899-1902. By Public subscription through the agency of the Midland Counties Tribune Newspaper. A.E.L. Rost SC.”

You will need to use this information later to help answer questions.
Sculpture Activity Sheet

Stand around the Boer War statue, in a large circle.
From this position DRAW the view you are able to see of the sculpture.
Activity Suggestion Sheet (on site)

- What are the first things the children notice about the sculpture? E.g. size, colour, texture.

- What happens to the sculpture as the children move around it? E.g. perspective, uniform.

- What do the children find interesting about the form and texture of the sculpture?

- What does the sculpture remind the children of?

- Identify why the sculpture was created, e.g. as a memorial to local soldiers who lost their lives

- Ask the children to point out the most interesting points of the sculpture and why?

- Ask the children how they think the sculpture was made? Refer to information pack

- Why is the sculpture in the park?

There is another piece of public art close to the museum under Vicarage Street Bridge... Have you seen it yet?

Alisha Miller's Gold Belt
For further information refer to the accompanying Gold Belt document.
Discover the wide range of exciting public artworks that can be seen across the borough, here is a selection...

Miners Welfare Park

The Miner, Bedworth
Stella Carr

Millennium ‘Dandelion’
Fountain
Lurgi Invent Ltd

Newtown Roundabout

Market Square, Nuneaton

George Eliot
John Letts

Boer War - Page 10
Take a tour and answer the following questions;

- Which one do you like best?

- What do you like about it?

- Why do you think it was commissioned?

NB Nuneaton and Bedworth are not responsible for risk assessing any activities that the school undertakes. It is highly recommended that a visiting school or group should conduct their own risk assessment prior to a visit to Riversley Park and other locations included in this pack.
Sculpture Activity Sheet

Try to answer the questions below. Your answers will be useful when you discuss them back at school.

1. Write down 3 things that you notice about the sculpture

2. Why do you think the sculpture was created?

3. How do you think this sculpture has been made?

4. Why has this sculpture been placed here?
What is public art – activity sheet

Split the class into groups to begin a discussion on the sculptures and public art that they have seen.

Questions that can be discussed.

• Why do we have sculptures and public art?

• What sort of sculptures could you make for your school?

• Think about the sculptures you have seen. Which did you like the best? Why?

• What materials do you think were used? Which materials do you think are most effective? Why?

• If you were to make a piece of public art, what would it be about? And where would you want it to be displayed?

Circle the words below you think best describe your piece of public art.

- Sharp
- Bronze
- Soft
- Natural
- Materials
- Texture
- Small
- Large
- Colourful
- Heavy
- Bright
- Cold
- Dark
- Marble

NBBC Arts Development
With thanks to Rugby Art Gallery & Museum in relation to the use of selected content.
What is public art – Activity Sheet

Research a piece of public art, whether it is something local to you or something you have found in a book. Now answer the questions below.

Why have you chosen this piece of work?

What is your favourite part of the work? What type of public sculpture do you think your chosen work falls under?

In the box below draw in detail your favourite aspect about your chosen piece of public art, for example this could be the intricate detail or where it’s displayed or who it reminds you of.
Teachers’ Notes

What is Public Art?

There are lots of different opinions about what Public Art is.

One simple definition is that, “Public Art is art created for places where the public can go.

It can include sculpture, temporary installation, painting, craft, design, film and video, sound art, digital art, urban design, architecture, street art, community arts, and arts events including festivals and major spectacles – from beer mats to iconic major works.”

A more comprehensive definition is provided by Channel 4’s Big Art Project “Maybe public art makes most of us think of a sculpture on a plinth? But in fact it can be anything – from beer mats to festivals; from train tickets to tower blocks.

These objects can have very powerful meanings for all sorts of reasons. Perhaps it’s because of what they make us remember or what they seem to express. Art can make an empty space seem like a significant place. It can celebrate someone or something, or it can commemorate. It can express any kind of feeling or idea.

Even bigger than these kinds of sculptures, and often in hard-to-reach or rural areas, is land art.

But public art can be much more than a permanent, solid sculpture. It can be:
• a short-lived object
• a one-off event that you could take part in by making something yourself or even performing (this can have just as much long-lasting meaning as a permanent object)
• an intervention by an artist that could be brief or long-term
• an artist’s performance.

Public art can be any kind of art in a public space, outside of a gallery. A public space could be a geographical space – urban or rural. It could be a city square, park or street. It could be every street in an area, every tree in a park, the banks of a river, every bus shelter in a town or every bus ticket.

A public space can also be a cultural space: a social or religious group, a sports team or a political party. And public art can also happen in quite private spaces, like a tower block, a school or a hospital.”
**War Memorials**

“War memorials are a familiar sight in the landscape of the UK (United Kingdom). They provide insight into not only the changing face of commemoration but also military history, social history and art history.”

A war memorial can be a building, monument, statue or other edifice to celebrate a war or victory, or to commemorate those who died or were injured in war.

**The Boer War**

Extract taken from the national archives

“The South African War, sometimes called the Boer War or Anglo-Boer War, was the first major conflict of a century that was to be marked by wars on an international scale. It demonstrated the inadequacy of 19th century military methods and raised issues of whether conscription should be brought in and began the use of concentration camps.

The South African War was fought between Britain and the self-governing Afrikaner (Boer) colonies of the South African Republic (the Transvaal) and the Orange Free State. (At the outbreak of war, Britain ruled the South African colonies of the Cape and Natal). The war began on October 11 1899, following a Boer ultimatum that the British should cease building up their forces in the region. The Boers had refused to grant political rights to non-Boer settlers, known as Uitlanders, most of whom were British, or to grant civil rights to Africans. Perhaps more important was the underlying question of control over the gold mines of the Transvaal at a time when the international financial system, and the stability of the British pound, was based on the gold standard. The war was also about Britain’s control of South Africa and therefore its ‘great power’ status... On the British side, troops came not just from Britain but also from other parts of the empire, especially Canada and Australia.”
Suggestions for Classroom Activities - Arts

Recreate your personal War Memorial sculpture inspired by the drawings and discussions encountered on your trip out.

**Teacher Preparation:**
- Notify the children a week in advance to bring in recyclable materials, e.g. toilet rolls, newspaper, string, plastic cups/plates, coloured paper etc.
- Glue, scissors, paint, coloured pencils or crayons will be needed.

**Children preparation:**
- Ask the children to create a sculpture or collage inspired by the drawing and ideas they had during the trip to the War Memorial Sculpture.
- After the children have made their piece, talk in groups about their individual pieces;
- Why they chose those certain materials?
- What they liked most about the sculpture they saw in the park?

**What the children would learn from this session**
- Environmental issues - They will become aware of recycling materials
- Citizenship- An artistic connection and learning experience for the children to learn about famous people from their local area.
Suggestions for Classroom Activities - Geography

The classroom activity will be for the children to get a chance to understand, when the Boer War happened, where it took place, how the war affected Nuneaton & Bedworth and our current links to the area today.

Teacher Preparation:

- A small introduction of the Boer War. Historic information provided in sculpture pack, as well as photos of the sculpture.
- Photocopies of a map of the world

What the children would learn from this session:

- They will get to learn about a new place around the world.
- The children will also become informed about the different histories and cultures of the places involved.
Key Words

• Bronze
• Public
• Sketches
• Maquette
• Installation
• Texture
• Perspective
• Freestanding
• Art
• Architect
• Sculptor
• Permanent
• Temporary
• Portraiture
• Military figure
• Environments
• Nature
• Traditional
• Modern
• Community
• Bright
• Marble
• Dark
• Large
• Small
• Heavy
• Soft
Web Links

The Standards Site
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

What is Public Art?
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_art

Sculpture

Arts Development, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/leisure-culture/arts-entertainment/arts-development

War Memorial Foundation
http://www.warmemorials.org/index.htm

UK National Inventory of War Memorials
http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/

The National Archives
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

IXIA
http://www.ixia-info.com

Channel 4 Big Art Project
http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/what.html

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