New First World War programme opens in the South East

15/05/2013

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is launching First World War: then and now, a £6m small grants programme to help communities mark the Centenary of the First World War.

HLF is making at least £1m available per year for six years until 2019. It will provide grants between £3,000 and £10,000 enabling communities and groups right across the UK to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage and deepen their understanding of the impact of the conflict.

Community groups including those from Kent and Surrey are helping to launch the scheme across the UK, by exploring what the legacy of the First World War means to them and sharing their stories and projects with others hoping to mark the Centenaries.

From investigating the burial of the Unknown Warrior to the experiences of villages that welcomed Canadian troops, there are so many stories to be told the legacy of which continue to impact and shape the lives of our communities today.

Welcoming the launch of First World War: then and now, Culture Secretary of State, Maria Miller, said: “It is completely right that we mark the centenary of the First World War with a national programme capturing our national spirit and saying something about who we are as a people. But what we do also needs to help create an enduring cultural and educational legacy for communities. The HLF grant programme announced today will play a big part in this, and builds on the substantial investment they have already made towards the Centenary.”

Sebastian Faulks CBE, broadcaster, novelist, author of Birdsong and member of the Government’s First World War Centenary advisory group, said: “HLF’s First World War small grants programme is an opportunity for every street, town or village to make sure they remember the cataclysmic events of a hundred years ago. It is a chance to learn and to commemorate in whatever way they choose."

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East England, said: “The impact of the First World War was far reaching, touching and shaping every corner of the UK and beyond. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s new programme will enable communities in South East England to explore the continuing legacy of this war and help young people in particular to broaden their understanding of how it has influenced our modern world.”

Successful projects will include:

- researching, identifying and recording local heritage;
- creating a community archive or collection;
- developing new interpretation of heritage through exhibitions, trails, smartphone apps etc;
- researching, writing and performing creative material based on heritage sources; and
- the new programme can also provide funding for the conservation of war memorials.

If a grant of more than £10,000 is needed for a First World War project, applicants can apply to HLF through its open programmes. HLF has already invested £12million in projects – large and small – that will mark the Centenary of First World War.

If you have a project idea to mark the Centenary, an online application pack is available on the programme page or contact the South East Team at southeastengland@hlf.org.uk or 020 7591 6171.

Notes to editors

Examples of HLF funded First World War projects in South East England:

The 90th Anniversary of the Burial of the Unknown Warrior
Most people know about the grave of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, containing remains of a soldier killed on the Western Front during the Great War. But who was he? Over 1,000 Dover, Chatham and London school children studied six casualties from their local areas, any one of whom might have been the Unknown Warrior, for this memorial project supported by a grant of £28,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

There were classroom sessions, visits to Westminster Abbey, and a specially-written play about servicemen's lives. An exhibition, and a stained-glass window created by children in workshops with a professional artist, toured nationally, and young people commemorated the exact 90th anniversary of the Warrior's homecoming with a professionally-composed musical. Schools, museums and libraries received educational resource booklets, and resources remain available at Dover's Virtual Memorial,

The Great War
Young people from Haslemere and Liphook will explore and commemorate the lives of the people who lived in their area a hundred years ago. The main focus of the project, which has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £17,900 and is led by Haslemere Educational Museum, are 318 Canadian soldiers buried at nearby Bramshott Cemetery, many of whom died during the influenza epidemic at the end of the First World War.

Up to 60 young people will be involved in heritage activities at the museum and around the community and will learn curatorial, exhibition development, collections management and communications skills. They will tell the local story of the war in an exhibition using their research, photography and filming projects and selected museum objects. They will also visit the site of the camp and the war graves, and the Imperial War Museum.

UK Government Centenary plans
In October 2012, the Prime Minister set out the Government's plans to mark the centenaries of the First World War commencing in 2014. These plans include a £35m refurbishment of the First World War galleries at the Imperial War Museum (IWM); The Government's principal partners in the commemorations will be the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the IWM, but will encompass support for a multitude of other initiatives, large and small, as they come together in the months and years to come.

Speaking at the Imperial War Museum in October, Prime Minister David Cameron, said: "A truly national commemoration cannot just be about national initiatives and government action. It needs to be local too...Let's get out there and make this centenary a truly national moment in every community in our land."

Further information

Phil Cooper, HLF Press Office on 07889 949 183 or phillipc@hlf.org.uk