Kiplin Hall investigates its wartime heritage

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Kiplin Hall in Time of War is part of the wider Yorkshire Country House in Time of War project, which is programmed to commence this autumn and lead up to and through the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914.

Seven other Yorkshire houses are participating, amongst them Castle Howard, Newby Hall and Beningborough Hall. Each of the eight properties has plans to undertake tasks relevant to the house and its succession of owners, such as research and conservation, and some, including Kiplin Hall, will present a public exhibition, which will link the participating houses.

Kiplin Hall's individual project focuses on two aspects of war and the country house. First, the people linked to Kiplin who experienced wars at different periods of history between the 17th and 20th centuries – the owners and their families, those who worked in the house or on the estate, and the local community. The second area examines the effect of war on the hall, estate and local community, particularly during the Second World War, when the hall was requisitioned by the Army. In June 1940, men from the 1st Battalion The East Lancashire Regiment came to Kiplin to recover after being rescued from the beaches of Dunkirk. In 1942, the RAF took over and Kiplin became a Munitions Unit supplying the local airfields with bombs. The hall was turned into flats for RAF officers, with the men living in the grounds and surrounding area.

Archival research and oral history are a key part of the project. Documents held at Kiplin Hall and at the North Yorkshire County Record Office form a major archive for the house and its history. Some of this archive is still unexamined, but the HLF grant will facilitate research, the results of which will be made available to visitors to Kiplin and online through the hall and the Partnership's websites. The recollections of Second World War veterans linked to Kiplin Hall and the local airfields, as well as local people evacuated as children to the area, will be gathered by a small team of volunteers.

The grant also enables the conservation of a kitchen and bathroom on the first floor from one of the hall's Second World War flats – rare survivors of wartime requisitioning of a country house, which are now in a fragile condition and require work to ensure that they are preserved for the future. These rooms are always popular with visitors who have memories of the period and are an important reminder of how country houses were used during the Second World War.

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "Yorkshire Country Houses in Time of War will provide numerous opportunities for people to discover the impacts of war on local country houses and their communities. At Kiplin Hall, the HLF grant will enable the conservation and rejuvenation of key rooms in their wartime story and enhance the visitor experience through local memories, research and interpretation."

Kiplin Hall Curator, Dawn Webster, said: "We are delighted to have received this funding from HLF for such a significant and interesting project that will appeal to so many people. The opportunity to work with other Yorkshire houses will increase audience numbers and help to disseminate information about the role played by country houses and the people associated with them in wars of many periods. I am sure much fascinating information will be discovered."

Notes to editors

Kiplin Hall was built in 1620 for George Calvert, 1st Lord Baltimore and founder of Maryland, USA. Since then four

families, the Calverts, Crowes, Carpenters and Talbots, all connected by blood or marriage owned the hall until 1968 when a charitable trust was formed to protect the house and its contents.

Further information

Contact the Curator, Dawn Webster, or the Administrator, Marcia McLuckie, on 01748 818 178 or 07740 927 608.