

The Prime Minister planting poppy seeds with local school children

Every school in the UK will receive a pack of poppy seeds to mark the Centenary of the First World War, as part of an educational initiative by The Royal British Legion aimed at helping young people understand the impact of conflict. The project has been made possible by a £100,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and was launched today in the garden of No.10 by the Prime Minister and pupils from The Cathedral School of St. Saviour and St. Mary Overie, Southwark.

As part of the Legion's Centenary Poppy Campaign, this National Lottery-funded project will enable schools across the UK to plant the poppies in their school grounds as a gesture of Remembrance to commemorate the Centenary, and help pupils learn about the First World War. The poppy seeds arrived in schools today accompanied by a booklet entitled *Remembrance and the Poppy: Past, Present and Future*.

In addition to the seeds, the HLF grant will see 550 volunteer 'Remembrance Ambassadors' trained over the next year with the goal of helping young people to explore the many stories of the First World War and increase their understanding of Remembrance and the significance of the poppy. The ambassadors will be working with schools, community groups, religious groups, and home educator forums amongst others to provide a lasting legacy of Remembrance education and understanding through the Centenary period and beyond.

Prime Minister David Cameron said: "The First World War centenary programme is about recognition and remembrance, focusing particularly on young people and helping them make a connection with the events that changed

the world a century ago. This poppy initiative is a great idea that will help the next generation understand the significance of what happened during the First World War and commemorate the sacrifice of those who died."

Charles Byrne, Director of Fundraising, The Royal British Legion: "Remembrance and the poppy is an important part of British life and culture and this campaign not only allows every school in the UK to participate in Centenary commemorations but importantly passes the torch of Remembrance on to a new generation."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "The poppy is an enduring symbol of Remembrance with its origins in the wake of the First World War. It provides an ideal starting point from which young people can explore this momentous conflict, which shaped the world we live in today."

Sajid Javid, Culture Secretary, said: "The poppy is a powerful symbol of remembrance and this is a wonderful example of how a local community initiative can help shape our national commemorations. I hope that young people in schools enjoy sowing the poppy seeds and watching them flourish and that it provides them with a vibrant connection between past and present generations."

This initiative forms part of the Legion's Centenary Poppy Campaign which aims to cover the UK with poppies during the centenary period in commemoration of all those who lost their lives in the First World War. The campaign was the idea of members of the Legion's Greenhithe and Swanscombe Branch and has been rolled out nationally with the support of partner B&Q. Packets of Flanders poppy seeds are available in B&Q stores nationwide with £1 from each packet being donated to the Legion.

Notes to editors

The Royal British Legion
The Royal British Legion stands shoulder to shoulder with all who serve. It is the nation's leading Armed Forces charity providing care and support to all members of the British Armed Forces past and present and their families. It is also the national Custodian of Remembrance and safeguards the Military Covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces. It is best known for the annual Poppy Appeal and its emblem, the red poppy.

The Centenary Poppy Campaign
The Centenary Poppy Campaign originated as an idea in the Greenhithe and Swanscombe Branch of the Legion. The aim of the campaign is to cover the UK with poppies during the centenary period in commemoration of all those who lost their lives in the First World War. The national campaign, which is being run with in partnership with retailer B&Q, will see the Legion asking the public and local authorities to purchase Flanders poppy seeds to plant on their own land. Poppy seeds are available nationwide from outlets of B&Q with a donation of £1 going towards the work of the Legion. Members of the public are asked to plant seeds on their own land only, with guidance from Defra asking that seeds are not sowed near agricultural areas or sites of scientific interest.

Heritage Lottery Fund
Since April 2010, HLF has invested over £47m in projects - large and small - exploring the many stories of the First World War including: £12.2m to secure the future of the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland, HMS Caroline in Belfast; £11.5m to the Imperial War Museum for its new First World war galleries and 14-18 Now; £290,000 to the Fusiliers Museum's new First World War exhibition. Follow us on twitter @heritagelottery, #understandingWW1

B&Q
B&Q is the largest home improvement and garden centre retailer in the UK with 362 stores in the UK and 9 stores in

Ireland. B&Q employs around 34,000 people nationwide, more than a quarter of whom are over 50 years of age, with a similar number under the age of 25.

Further information

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