Community projects marking First World War



British 55th Division gas casualties on 10 April 1918

Today, on the eve of the Centenary of the UK entering the First World War, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced it has so far awarded more than £4million to 500 community projects through its dedicated First World War: then and now programme.

Launched in May 2013, First World War: then and now is HLF's small grants programme which offers groups up and down the country between £3,000 and £10,000 to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage.

Grants have enabled:

- blind and partially sighted groups in Wolverhampton to research how the war advanced ophthalmic medicine
- people across the UK to investigate the names commemorated on their local war memorials including Abbotskerswell in Devon, Chorley in Lancashire and Belfast in Northern Ireland
- the contribution of Scotland's nurses to the war effort is being marked
- the stories of Commonwealth to be explored and shared

Rt Hon Sajid Javid, Secretary of State, said: "The success of this programme shows the incredible depth of interest right across the country in marking the centenary of the First World War. The Government wanted the whole nation to get

involved and that is clearly what's happening. This sort of programme – helping community projects off the ground - is exactly what the National Lottery does so well."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "When we opened this programme in 2013, the interest we had already seen from people looking to mark the Centenary meant we knew it would be popular but we have been astounded at the demand and the sheer breadth of stories people have been uncovering. 500 projects are now underway and this is just the start; we will continue to support new projects as the Centenary unfolds."

Amongst the 500 awarded to date, five new projects are being announced today:

Restoration and Repair to Village War Memorial Clock – Anglesey, Wales
Trewalchmai Community Council
This project will help restore and better understand the story of the War Memorial Clock located in Trewalchmai village in Anglesey. The memorial was originally funded and erected by the parishioners in 1926 and contains the inscriptions of both First World War and later Second World War servicemen who lost their lives. Alongside ensuring the clock is in good condition so it can be appreciated and cherished by future generations in the community, this project will also help local people to explore the stories of the individuals commemorated.

Warriors at War, Wigan
Wigan Warriors Community Foundation
In partnership with Wigan Council's Leisure and Culture Trust, this project will see young people across Wigan explore the history of Wigan Rugby Club, its players and their contribution to the First World War. The project will trace what happened to the players who signed up and fought during the conflict, looking at their individual war records, their sporting achievements and what this meant in relation to local pride and identity. The programme will conclude with a themed rugby tournament.

Feeding the Front Line: Banbury's explosive role in The First World War
The Banbury Museum Trust
Near Banbury lies the overgrown site of one of only two surviving First World War lyddite shell filling factories in Britain, and the only one designated as a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage. The munitions factory is not well known among the local communities of South Northamptonshire and Banbury. Through guided site visits and an exhibition, this project will for the first time make it possible for young people in particular to learn about the role of the munitions factory in the war and the stories of those who worked there. Young people will also be involved in the guided site visits.

The Trench - Lugwardine, West Midlands
2Faced Dance Company
Herefordshire's 2Faced Dance Company and St Mary's RC High School in Lugwardine will take the 27 names inscribed on the village war memorial as a starting point for young people to understand how the First World War affected the lives of their forebears. Participants will interview and film ex-servicemen and their families to compare present day experiences with those of the Great War. A working 'trench' similar to those at Vimy Ridge on the Western Front, will be built in the school grounds as a memorial and 'living classroom'. The students will create a piece of dance theatre combining film, music and poetry about the war. This will be performed in Lugwardine before touring schools across the county.

WWI: Glasgow
Sunny Govan Community Radio
Sunny Govan Community Radio (SGCR) volunteers and local people are to research, create and broadcast a radio

series called World War 1 which will reflect on people's experiences of the First World War both in Glasgow and on the Front Line. It will comprise a combination of factual news bulletins as if broadcast from the front line followed by radio drama programmes. The project will work with local people to create the fictional characters, living through their experiences based on the real life events the project unearths.

Grants are still available for First World War projects. To find out how to apply for funding visit the First World War: then and now programme page. If a group needs a grant of more than £10,000 it can apply to HLF through its open programmes, more details are available at Understanding the First World War feature.

Notes to editors

Follow us on Twitter @heritagelottery, #understandingWW1.

Other HLF-funded First World War projects include:

First World War Centenary Project - IWM London
An HLF grant of £6.5m has helped transformed the IWM London (part of Imperial War Museums) and its ground-breaking new First World War Galleries have just opened.

Images available on request.

Further information

HLF Press Office: Natasha Hughes or Alison Scott on 020 7591 6143 / 6032. Out of hours mobile: 07973 613 820.