Words on War: children mark First World War



Children marking the First World War Centenary through the arts

Richmond Cultural Education Partnership has been running the Words on War initiative since February, working with Hackforth and Hornby and Barton Church of England Primary Schools and Boroughbridge High School to mark the anniversary.

Pupils from the three schools were able to handle original objects from the Green Howards Museum collection and learn about the First World War before using the objects, and other supporting material such as songs from the time and books about the conflict, to inspire them to create their own original work.

Hackforth and Hornby pupils used a mess tin, gas attack warning rattle, Princess Mary Christmas gift tin and a pin cushion keepsake from the museum's collection to help them write a song called Things in a Museum.

Boroughbridge High students adapted the war poetry of Green Howard soldier, 2nd Lt John Stanley Purvis into a modern drama piece, whilst pupils at Barton explored how they would have felt when war was declared, writing diary entries from the perspective of their different family members.

The partnership's Education Manager, Liam Beeton, explains: "It's an important milestone year and the majority of the children were already aware of the significance of the centenary and the impact the war had. The pupils worked really

hard to create an original and thought-provoking response to the literature, songs and historic objects they were introduced to over the course of the project."

The three schools came together at Richmond's Georgian Theatre Royal to showcase their creativity in a performance watched by pupils from St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and Richmond Church of England Primary School. The finale saw everyone in the theatre joining in with a sing-a-long of songs from the era.

Karen Eastwood, Head of Drama at Boroughbridge High School, added: "The students involved were not necessarily our usual performers, but they rose to the challenge. We had Forces children in the group and they were able to share their own stories, which helped drive our work."

Commenting on the performances, part of the museum's redevelopment project, Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "The First World War had a far-reaching impact, touching and shaping all corners of the UK and beyond. It also had a deep personal impact for so many people – an aspect Words On War has explored and portrayed in such a creative way. The museum was awarded a well-deserved £974,600 HLF grant to dramatically enhance its display of collections, which give an insight into the lives and service of the more than 65,000 Yorkshiremen who joined their local infantry during the First World War."

To see the project video and listen to *Things in a Museum*, visit the Green Howards Museum's Youtube channel.

Notes to editors

About the Green Howards Museum redevelopment project
The Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire is currently closed for redevelopment. A HLF grant of £974,600 has enabled the complete transformation of the museum, which is housed in a former church in the centre of the town's market place.

The HLF grant has also enabled the museum to employ an Education Manager, who will work in partnership with The Station and The Georgian Theatre Royal to create and deliver a joint programme of activity for schools, working as Richmond Cultural Education Programme. A Community Liaison Officer has also been recruited to forge links with a variety of community groups and encourage greater involvement with the museum.

The total cost of the project is £1.7million pounds and the Green Howards Trust, along with other charitable trusts and private donors, are contributing more than £700,000. The museum will re-open in late summer 2014.

The museum collection numbers over 45,000 objects and spans 300 years of military heritage. The oldest objects date from 1688 and our latest acquisitions have been donated by the Yorkshire Regiment whilst on Operations in Afghanistan and whilst stationed in Cyprus.

Between January and December 2012, 10,600 people visited the museum. Following redevelopment it is anticipated an average of 18,000 people will visit each year.

The Green Howards Museum was originally opened in 1973 by His Majesty, King Olav V of Norway. Some of the museum's displays were updated in the 1990s but no major building work has been carried out since the museum opened. As time has gone on, it has become increasingly difficult to deliver a high-quality visitor experience.

The project will see the complete reconfiguration of the building with a new flexible display spaces, lift, toilets, and new stores. The exhibition galleries will be transformed, providing an opportunity to update the way the story of the regiment

is told. For the first time, the Normanby Room, with its fine collection of Robert ‘Mousey’ Thompson furniture and regimental artwork, will be open to the public. Also on display in the room will be the Regiment’s silver, uniforms worn in the Mess and band instruments and uniforms. Together these objects will give visitors an insight into the social life of the Regiment.

Further information about the redevelopment is available on the Green Howards Museum website.

Further information

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