London Jewish Cultural Centre secures National



Jewish soldiers during the First World War www.jewisheastend.com

We Were There Too, which has received a £408,000 HLF grant, is a unique cross-community project run by the London Jewish Culture Centre (LJCC). A digital archive and interactive website will be created to record the impact, experiences and contribution of London's Jewish communities during the First World War.

The first phase will run between January 2016 and January 2018 but the project will continue beyond January 2018.

We Were There Too aims to create a permanent record of the lives of London’s Jewish men and women and their families, both in the military and on the Home Front, during 1914-1919, ensuring that their stories are not lost for future generations. On the We Were There Too website, community members will be able to upload their stories including records, photographs, documents and, using 3D scanning, artefacts such as buckles, belts and medals.

The site has two distinct sections. 'History Windows' describes aspects of Jewish life in London from 1914-1919. The website also includes the facility for individuals, community groups, schoolchildren and families to create a Personal Record of a person living in London during that time.

Community engagement

The project will work across the whole of London with Community Engagement events taking place during the first phase. Large numbers of volunteers will research and write about aspects of Jewish life in London and in the Armed Forces during the war. Volunteers will also help those who want to record the stories of family members.

[quote=Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London]"A great opportunity for people from across London to learn about and commemorate the important contribution made by the Jewish community to the war effort"[/quote]

The Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade (JLGB) is the Lead Strategic Partner for the project. For 120 years the JLGB has trained and developed young people to reach their potential through active citizenship. It has a rich history of the First World War period, with more than 500 of its members killed during the conflict.

Michael Marx, Chairman of London Jewish Culture Centre Trustees, commented: "The Community is immensely grateful to Heritage Lottery as the major funder for this project. Our community played a very significant part in the First World War, and it is often overshadowed by the Second World War and its terrible events. It is now a race against time to collect second-generation stories of this period and the project could not be more timely."

John Cooper, JLGB Vice-President, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for young people to use digital technology to promote their Heritage and at the same time gain useful skills and qualifications."

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, said: "We are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we are able to support this project looking at a significant yet often underexplored aspect of London Jewish life.

"It is a great opportunity for people from across London to learn about and commemorate the important contribution made by the Jewish community to the war effort."

Further information

- Alan Fell, Project Director, on tel: 0203 837 3357/07768 005537
- Neil Martin, Chief Executive, JLGB, on tel: 0208 989 8990