

The Machine Gun Section of No.1 Company, Gold Coast Regiment

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Introduction – HLF Centenary activities and the evaluation

As part of the 2014-18 commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War (FWW), the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is undertaking a range of activities through both grant-making and working with Government on the UK-wide Centenary programme.

Grants are provided for FWW Centenary projects through various programmes, including:

- First World War: Then and Now, which funds projects from £3,000 - £10,000 which explore, conserve and share the heritage of the FWW.
- Our Heritage, which provides grants of £10,000–£100,000 for projects which focus on any type of heritage.
- Young Roots, providing £10,000–£50,000 for projects led by young people, and which are delivered in partnership between a youth organisation and a heritage organisation.
- Heritage Grants, which provides grants of more than £100,000 for projects which focus on any type of heritage.

From April 2010 to 1 March 2018, HLF has awarded over £94 million to more than 1,900 projects. This includes over 1,400 projects funded through the FWW: Then and Now programme.

The two broad aims of HLF's FWW Centenary-related activity are:

1. To fund projects which focus on the heritage of the First World War and collectively:

- create a greater understanding of the First World War and its impact on the range of communities in the UK;
- encourage a broad range of perspectives and interpretations of the First World War and its impacts;
- enable young people to take an active part in the First World War Centenary commemorations;
- leave a UK-wide legacy of First World War community heritage to mark the Centenary;
- increase the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage, and to raise the profile of community heritage.

2. To use the Centenary projects that HLF funds to communicate the value of heritage, the impact of our funding and the role of HLF.

This evaluation focuses on the first set of aims, as well as the HLF outcomes framework, which covers outcomes for heritage, for people and for communities.

What has HLF funded?

Projects are taking place right across the UK, with at least one project taking place in 95% of the UK's local authorities. Projects are also taking place across areas with different levels of deprivation, from the very least to very most deprived. Overall 57% of projects are in the more deprived 50% of areas in England, 62% in Scotland and 50% in Wales.

HLF-funded activity covers a wide and growing range of FWW themes, from the war in Syria through to the role of animals in UK towns, as well as a large body of projects that focus on more traditional themes such as the local people who went to war, local war memorials as specific events (for instance, this year the Battle of Passchendaele was a key event). The vast majority of projects (92%) included some focus on local people.

Projects also engaged in a wide range of activities. Most (76%) projects led community events, while large proportions also put on talks from FWW experts or delivered workshops (60%) with heritage organisations such as museums, libraries, archives or local history societies (52%).

Projects also produced a wide range of outputs to interpret and explain heritage. This includes 57% projects in Year 4 that had produced project websites, 28% who had made films and 38% who had put on performances, alongside more traditional media such as creating leaflets or exhibitions and displays.

Who was involved? - Numbers and profile of participants and volunteers

An estimated 2.3 million people took part in projects in Year 4, based on Grant Recipient Survey responses. A total of 9.4 million people took part in funded projects since 2010. Projects engaged with varying numbers of participants, from those engaging with less than 100 participants (17%) to engaging with over 5,000 participants (13%).

Young people under 16 and older people over 60 were particularly well represented in projects. Engagement with different ethnic groups was broadly in line with UK population demographics on the whole.

90% of projects worked with volunteers, with over 26,000 volunteers engaged in projects over the course of the evaluation to date. These volunteers provided an estimated 241,000 days' on projects (based on Grant Recipient

Survey data). However, as in earlier years, it remains a challenge for projects to engage non-White people in volunteering. In Year 4 only 8% of volunteers were not identified as White, compared to 13% of the UK population.

Why did projects and participants get involved?

Increasing understanding of the FWW and its impacts was an important motivation for many people leading projects and those seeking to participate. For both participants and grant recipients, motivations relating to learning and education featured highly. In Year 4, 76% of participants said that they were motivated by a desire to learn more about the FWW either in the local area, or in general. Open text survey responses from grant recipients most commonly referred to the importance of commemorating the FWW and its impacts, and to uncovering untold stories – either locally or those experienced by particular population groups (such as women, and people with different ethnic backgrounds).

Progress against Centenary activity aims

There is evidence of continuing progress against each of the FWW Centenary aims. An abiding theme is continuity from Year 3 to Year 4 with very few changes to overall trends.

Create a greater understanding of the First World War and its impact on the range of communities in the UK

HLF's FWW activity has had a catalytic effect on interest and passion in local FWW history, reaching large numbers of people and improving their understanding of the FWW. Significantly, the community focus has led to activities that make it possible for individuals and communities to identify with the context of the First World War. HLF's funding is reaching greater numbers of people across the UK, and new audiences.

Encourage a broad range of perspectives and interpretations of the First World War and its impacts

A wide breadth of topics has been covered by projects, which in itself goes a long way to meeting this aim. Few aspects of the war have been untouched. Most projects seek to focus initially on local stories but HLF FWW Centenary activity is encouraging a broad range of perspectives and interpretations of the FWW and its impacts. 99% of Participant Survey respondents in Year 4 said they had improved their knowledge about the FWW in their local area, but – for example – 85% said they had made some gains in knowledge about disabled soldiers, and 91% said they had learned something about culture in wartime. 91% of projects felt that they had changed the way people think about the FWW and/or its impact.

Enable young people to take an active part in the First World War Centenary commemorations

The extent that HLF FWW Centenary projects have engaged with young people is very positive. The Grant Recipient Survey indicates that around one-third (30%) of all participants in Year 4 of the evaluation were young people – around 680,000 young people in total. Those aged 11-16 are particularly well represented, accounting for 16% of participants

(compared to 7% of the UK population). Young people aged 19-25 are represented broadly in line with the proportion of people aged 19-25 in the UK population.

When looking at the ages of volunteers and trainees on projects, the percentage of those aged 17-25 is broadly in line with the percentage of 17-25 year olds in the UK population. This suggests that at the very least young people are not missing out on opportunities for in-depth engagement with projects.

Leave a UK-wide legacy of First World War community heritage to mark the Centenary

There is growing evidence – sustained over the four years of the evaluation to date – that heritage legacy is being created through the recovery and creation of physical heritage materials and digital archiving. There is also evidence from the longitudinal surveys that projects are having an impact beyond the end of funded activities, including on people's knowledge and skills. HLF are working with partner organisations to further promote digital archiving of projects, although there is still a significant number of projects who do not produce websites.

Increase the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage, and to raise the profile of community heritage

HLF FWW Centenary activity has transformed the community history landscape, transforming the capacity of community organisations to engage with heritage. Many organisations have undertaken heritage activities for the first time. The vast array of activity taking place has raised the profile of community heritage across the UK. Grant recipients still feel the positive effects to a similar – or even greater - degree a year on from the end of their project. This suggests HLF funding impacts on capacity in the longer-term as well as during the period of project delivery – a very positive finding.

Outcomes

The HLF outcomes framework covers 14 different outcomes across three themes: heritage, people and communities. As in previous years, people outcomes were most pronounced in Year 4, in particular those relating to knowledge and skills.

Outcomes for heritage

Cumulative evidence across the evaluation period shows that outcomes are being achieved across different heritage outcomes albeit to varying extents.

Projects were most likely to have achieved those outcomes most directly related to FWW Centenary heritage: for instance improving the condition of heritage; better interpreting and explaining heritage; and locating/recording heritage. 72% of projects said that they had located, uncovered or recovered aspects of FWW heritage for the first time and 26% had improved the physical condition of FWW heritage. Relatively few projects implemented new structures to better manage heritage, which follows findings from Years 1 to 3. This follows the trends of previous years and is what might be expected given the size of most grants and the focus of most projects: grants were not primarily aimed at

organisational capacity building, although this was an indirect outcome of grant-making.

Outcomes for people

As in Years 1 to 3, outcomes for people continued to be the most evidenced set of outcomes in Year 4. There was good evidence across each of the outcome areas. Almost every project in Year 4 (99%) identified the improvement of people's knowledge and understanding about the FWW as a project outcome, with 84% saying it was one of their most important outcomes. 67% of participants said that they had made gains in knowledge. Similarly high numbers identified providing people with something rewarding and enjoyable to do (89%) and changing the way people think about the FWW (91%) as outcomes. High levels of skills development were reported: over four-fifths of participant survey respondents noted at least some improvement in information management skills (85%) and improved communication skills (85%) – an impressive achievement for projects. Participants and grant recipients both overwhelmingly reported that projects had successfully challenged preconceptions about the FWW: 81% of participants gave a score of 8 out of 10 or higher when asked the extent to which FWW Centenary activities had challenged them or had been thought-provoking.

Outcomes for communities

As in previous years of the evaluation, projects have been able to provide some evidence across three of the outcomes areas. Environmental impacts tended not to be an objective for projects and were not covered in the survey or qualitative elements of the research; and local economic impacts are largely beyond the scope of the evaluation. The findings suggest that more people have engaged with heritage (91% of projects felt that they had achieved this), and to some degree so have a wider range of people. 48% of projects felt that activities had increased the diversity of people who engage with the heritage of the First World War, although projects however sometimes struggle to engage with different communities or new groups of people with the exception of young people. As noted above, projects were taking place in communities with different levels of deprivation, with a relatively even spread across the most to least deprived communities. Participants felt that their local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit, with 80% feeling that the project had helped their local community (scoring 7 out of 10 or more in terms of the extent that the project had made their community a better place to live, work or visit).

Conclusions

The fourth year of the evaluation has in many respects replicated findings from previous years, with overall conclusions being positive. HLF Centenary activity has led to a large increase in community heritage projects and activities with large numbers of people taking part in projects. Understanding of the FWW has been positively impacted by HLF Centenary activity, with knowledge gains about the FWW in general as well as specific topics central to most projects. The huge number of people involved, new materials being created and heritage being recorded adds to the overall sense of a whole new UK-wide record of the FWW and the Centenary. This is creating a legacy for people, places and heritage more generally. And, HLF funding is impacting on organisational capacity and resilience in a variety of ways. Without HLF funding, a large number of FWW Centenary projects would not take place.

There remain some challenges for HLF and for projects, particularly around increasing the diversity of volunteers and ensuring long-term organisational benefits. HLF and partner organisations might also further consider how to capture the achievements of the 47% of projects that do not produce websites. HLF have introduced measures to tackle each of these issues in the last year and hopefully the impacts of these will be seen in the final year of activity.

The evaluation will continue to roll out data collection activities into Year 5. As in Year 3, given that this report largely mirrors findings from previous years, and that the increasing size of datasets allows us to start thinking about how the data might be broken down in different ways, it is worth considering whether to look at some specific issues in depth in Year 5.