Young people explore the Accrington Pals story

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The project will help local young people mark the upcoming Centenary of the First World War.

The Civic Arts Centre, formerly known as Oswaldtwistle Town Hall was once used as a First World War recruitment office for the area. The men who were recruited at the Town Hall formed part of the regiment known as Accrington Pals. Through this project, local young people will explore the social reasons for signing up such as the promises of regular payments, peer pressure and wanting to contribute to the war effort. Alongside looking at the lives of the soldiers themselves, the project will also look at how the war affected their family and the surrounding community.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: “The First World War changed the face of modern history. It touched the lives of everyone in this country and beyond, including the men and women of Oswaldtwistle and its impact continues to be felt today. HLF is committed to funding a variety of projects like ‘Recruitment’, which will help local young people gain a deeper understanding of impact of the conflict on their local community, in this case the immense contribution of the Accrington Pals. HLF has already awarded almost £1m to heritage projects in Hyndburn marking and today’s grant will complement that previous investment - opening up local heritage for everyone.”

"We are thrilled to receive the Heritage Lottery grant and the Strong Voices funding to help us deliver a substantial programme of events throughout 2014" said Gayle Knight, Creative Director for Hyndburn Arts Trust.

The project will:

- involve a core group of around 20 young people to learn about the Accrington Pals and their important wartime contribution;
- enable the young people to visit the Imperial War Museum North, sites associated with the regiment such as the Coppice in Accrington where they carried out training, and the North West Sound Archive to help with their research;
- carry out important work to trace relatives of soldiers from Oswaldwistle commemorated on the town's war memorial and record their stories;
- produce a number of drama pieces based on their research which they will perform at local schools and community venues to share their findings with a wider audience.

Notes to editors

Heritage Lottery Fund

- HLF have awarded a total of £987,000 to heritage projects across Hyndburn, including the Accrington Town Centre and Accrington Pals THI project, and the Great Harwood Mercer Memorial Clock Tower. Hyndburn sits within one of the Heritage Lottery Fund’s development areas which means our local team will be working especially closely with local groups to encourage future applications.
- HLF has already awarded £28million to projects from across the United Kingdom and will continue to support as many applications as we can afford that want to commemorate the centenary.

- Through its First World War: then and now programme, HLF is making at least £1million available per year for six years until 2019. It will provide grants between £3,000 and £10,000 enabling communities and groups right across the UK to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage and deepen their understanding of the impact of the conflict.

Hyndburn Arts Trust has received additional funding from Curious Minds Strong Voices funding which will pay for one young person to work at the Civic for one day a week for six months. Lucy Fitzpatrick starts on the 1 October 2013 and her role will be researching information for Sophie to use. Specifically, Lucy will be trying to find any direct descendants or relatives of any of the Pals who still live in Oswaldtwistle.

Sophie Fitzpatrick, who is currently managing the Welcome to Gobbinland project, will head up the new project. She will be developing a year-long series of drama events, short plays and performances and a schools programme.

Further information

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