

Diamond War Memorial

20/01/2009

The website is part of Holywell Trust's Diamond War Memorial Project which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project involves the investigation of the stories of the lives and deaths of the many people associated with the city, from both the Nationalist and Unionist community, who died as a result of the First World War.

The website contains the findings of local historian, Trevor Temple's research into the histories of the 756 people whose names appear on the 4 plinths at the Memorial. Also discovered were the names of 400 more people who died but whose names have not yet been recorded. Stories provided by local people whose loved ones are commemorated, and those with an ongoing connection to the Memorial, are also included.

Welcoming guests to the event, Project Co-ordinator, Mary McElhinney, said: "With the support of Holywell Trust and The Heritage Lottery Fund, we have managed to achieve a lot in just a year. Trevor's research is phenomenal. Not only has he discovered 400 more names which, for various reasons, have been overlooked, he has also found the names of many more people who survived the Great War but did not talk about it.

"When we identified that 48% of those named on the cenotaph were from the Nationalist Community, this fact facilitated my appeal to Derry City Council to open the gates to the Public. Many people, especially those from a Nationalist background, are now taking an interest in their shared heritage which, for 90 years, remained buried. To date, the Memorial has not been vandalised and locals and tourists alike are benefiting greatly from this newfound 'openness'."

Speaking at the event, Máire Gallagher of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "We are delighted to support this project which has explored the hidden history of the Diamond War Memorial, and in doing so, has shown that it belongs to all the people of this historic city. The use of the internet is an excellent way of sharing this history. By making this information available for the whole community to access online, the website will help lead to a greater understanding of the past and of our unique heritage".

The website, which was designed by the Verbal Arts Centre, was launched by Eamon Baker who was initially responsible for promoting this most successful project.

www.diamondwarmemorial.com