Sharing First World War stories from home and



The second project will compare the experiences of the local community on the Home Front with those of people living in Eastern Europe during the 1914-18 conflict. One in three local people in this part of the Fens now hails from countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Russia.

Helen Grant, Minister for the First World War Centenary added: “These are great projects, which will help shed light on some of the amazing, uplifting – and sometimes heart-breaking – personal stories from 100 years ago. The Heritage Lottery Fund grants will ensure that both children and the migrant communities in the area get the chance to understand the unique impact the war had on Wisbech.”

Rachel Fuller, Development Officer, Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “This pair of imaginative projects open a fascinating window on the scale of the conflict by reflecting not only its tragic impact in a small local community but also on families from other parts of Europe whose descendants have since settled in the Fens. We’re always happy to hear from groups right across the Fens that have an idea for a heritage project.”

Emneth in World War One – discovering the past, remembering the fallen
The village of Emneth, just outside Wisbech, has a war memorial bearing the names of 27 local men who died in the First World War. Each child in Class 6 in Emneth Primary will research the history of one of the fallen servicemen as

part of a project that has been awarded a £9,600 grant. Once they have discovered what they can about the local men who perished in the conflict the information will be published in a special book to create a permanent legacy.

Other children at the school will help in other aspects of the project. Class 6 will also be writing and performing a play based on their research and designing and helping to build a small memorial garden in Emneth cemetery.

Head teacher Alison Townsend said: “We are thrilled by the award of this funding. Our World War One project is a wonderful opportunity for our children to learn about the past and the impact of the great events of a hundred years ago. They will be applying what they have learnt to tell the story of Emneth’s fallen soldiers in the play they will be performing this summer. Our project will span the generations.”

Rhys, aged 9, in Class 6 said: “We are very thankful that the Lottery gave us some money but very sad that these brave soldiers died.”

Rebecca, aged 9, in Class 6 said: “The memorial garden will have flowers to celebrate who died in World War One; it will help us remember the 27 soldiers from Emneth.”

Ellie, aged 10, in Class 6 said: “The memorial will help us to remember the soldiers in World War One. The memorial is something that has people’s names on it who lost their life in World War One. We should not forget people in World War One.

World War 1 – Memoirs and reminiscences from Europe

The Rosmini Centre, Wisbech, will train a group of volunteer researchers to capture the First World War reminiscences of communities currently living in Fenland, some of whose families experienced the conflict in various parts of Europe. This will create a picture of the war from English, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Russian perspectives. The results of this multi-national investigation, supported by a £9,700 grant, will be on display at the Centre with written material in all the languages of those taking part.

Relatives of local people still living in Central and Eastern Europe will be contacted via social media and asked to supply information. Artifacts relating to the war will be sought and replicas made by volunteers in the Centre’s workshop that produces wood, metal or textile products.

For the Rosmini Centre, Anita Grodkiewicz said: “We have over 130 volunteers at the Rosmini Centre one third of whom come from Central and Eastern Europe. Many have shown a keen interest in being involved in this project and we have had a fantastic response from young people from both our settled and migrant communities keen to learn more.”

Notes to editors

On 4 August 2014 it will be 100 years since Britain entered the First World War. Within government the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is leading plans to build a commemoration fitting of this significant milestone in world history. As the Prime Minister made clear when he launched the programme in October 2012, the main theme will be remembrance with a particular focus on bringing the centenary alive for young people. There will be a number of national events across the four years, as well as cross-Government programmes to help deliver this. Further details can be found on the government centenary website.

Further information

For further information please contact Vicky Wilford, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937, email: vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper, HLF press office, on 07889 949173.

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