Lottery supports Worcestershire World War 100 project to mark centenary

30/09/2013

The £353,200 grant will enable the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS) to work with a variety of partners to develop exhibitions at venues across the county, which will tell the many stories of how the First World War shaped lives from its outbreak in 1914 through to the present day.

Starting next year at the beginning of the centenary commemoration period of five years, the project will focus on increasing people's knowledge of how the First World War impacted on Worcestershire's history and traditions, by encouraging people of all ages to get involved.

From stories of soldiers and their families, the impact of the conflict on healthcare in the county, to the role of local women on the home front, the project will give the people of present day Worcestershire the chance to learn about the technological, social, economic, political and medical developments in a time of trauma and crisis that still have influence on our lives today.

Organisations partnering with the WAAS include a range of local museums, some of which have a particular interest in the First World War, Worcester Cathedral and Worcestershire City Council. Together they will host themed exhibitions at a variety of county-wide venues on subjects such as the battles of Gheluvelt, Neuve Chappelle and the Somme, the impact of the war on mental health, the role of notable people such as Vesta Tilley and Reverend Studdert-Kennedy, and life on the home front. These will be jointly promoted through linked heritage trails using QR technology an interactive website, in addition to touring events reaching out across the county. Partner organisations include:

- The Mayor and Worcester City Council
- Museums Worcestershire
- University of Worcester
- Worcester Cathedral
- Worcester Regimental Museum
- Worcester Yeomanry Cavalry Museum Trust
- George Marshall Medical Museum
- The Infirmary (University of Worcester)
- Tudor House, Worcester Museum of Local Life
- Elgar Birthplace Museum
- Avoncroft Museum
- Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum

Over 150 volunteers will learn skills in research and digitisation of museum collections' back catalogues of artefacts, archival research, curating exhibitions, using databases, conservation and working with the local community as the centenary approaches. Aiming to reach thousands of people over five years, the project will also invite the local community to donate or loan items of their own relating to the First World War for the exhibitions.

Cllr Lucy Hodgson, Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Localism and Communities, said: "We are very pleased the Heritage Lottery Fund has made this award. It is very exciting as we can now develop the ideas and activities to commemorate the conflict during this four-year long anniversary.

"The County Council and its partners including the University, the Cathedral, Avoncroft Museum, the George Marshall Medical Museum and Worcester's Tudor House, have many plans for exhibitions, trails, commemorations, school and library activities, along with the development of a People's Archive of material from Worcestershire's War experience. We really want people across the county to get involved, to join in, to learn and to remember."

Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group, and member of the Government's World War One Centenary Advisory Board, welcomed the news: "This is terrific news, and a marvellous compliment to all the Worcestershire-based organisations and individuals who have worked so hard to put together such exciting and rewarding plans to ensure that all of us in the county are able to commemorate the events of 1914-18 in meaningful and appropriate ways. Councillor Adrian Gregson deserves our special thanks and congratulations for leading the bid so brilliantly."

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands said: “The First World War changed the face of modern history touching the lives of everyone in this country and beyond. HLF has committed to funding a variety of projects, from organisations large and small, which will create a deeper understanding of the heritage of the conflict. Some of these will capture the memories of individual soldiers, regiments or families; some will reveal the importance and uncover stories around local war memorials, whilst others like Worcestershire World War 100 will encourage thousands of people to learn more about how this period in our history changed the future of Worcester and beyond. We have already supported over £28m of projects from across the United Kingdom and will continue to support as many applications as we can afford that want to commemorate the centenary.”

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Notes to editors

All Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group
The All-Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group, chaired by Lord Faulkner of Worcester, has over 90 members. Co-secretaries are Peter Barton, historian & author of several books on WW1 in association with the Imperial War Museum and Professor Peter Doyle, a military terrain specialist.

Support for First World War projects
Through its First World War: then and now programme, HLF is making at least £1m 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. To find out how to apply for funding visit First World War: then and now programme page.

If a group needs a grant of more than £10,000 for a First World War project, it can apply to HLF through its open programmes.

UK Government Centenary plans
In June 2013, the government set out its plans to mark the centenaries of the First World War commencing in 2014. These plans include a £35m refurbishment of the First World War galleries at the Imperial War Museum (IWM). The

Government's principal partners in the commemorations will be the HLF and the IWM, but will encompass support for a multitude of other initiatives, large and small, as they come together in the months and years to come.

Further information

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