London’s war remembered – community projects



Painting of Frank Edwards by Lady Butler London Irish Rifles

More than 70 community projects throughout the capital have so far shared almost £2million to discover how the conflict affected their local towns and communities.

Sue Bowers, Head of HLF London, said: “I’m sure everyone has been moved by the sight of tens of thousands of ceramic poppies filling the moat at the Tower of London representing every British military death during the First World War. The local projects we are supporting show quite clearly how the lives of millions more people were affected by the conflict. No aspect of London life was left untouched by the war and there are stories of great courage and heroism, of suffering and sadness but also determination that things could be changed for the better.”

In the last three months alone HLF grants have been awarded to projects in 15 of London’s 32 boroughs. Here is a selection:

The Wounded
The Science Museum - £100,000 (RB Kensington & Chelsea)
The museum will create an 18-month exhibition drawn from its extensive collection of First World War medical objects. This will explore medical challenges posed by this new kind of warfare, innovations that came out of the conflict and how medical lessons learned a century ago still resonate in today’s military. The collection, including British, French,

Belgium and German artefacts, traces a number of pivotal developments including in X-rays, blood transfusion, artificial limb design and early plastic surgery.

Contact: Margaret Koval, Science Museum, London, on tel: 020 7942 4303

Voluntary Care in the Theatre of War
Museum of the Order of St John - £69,400 (LB Islington)
The St John Ambulance Brigade Hospital in Étaples, northern France, cared for 35,000 patients from 1915 to 1919 and was staffed mainly by volunteers. One of these was Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse, Veronica Nisbet. She kept a vivid record of her years at the hospital, enlivened by her skill as an artist. Her scrapbook of cartoons, sketches and photographs is the basis of this project that commemorates the heroic wartime work of St John volunteers.

Contact: Hannah Agass, Museum of the Order of St John, on tel: 020 7324 4075

Football at the Front
The Twickenham Museum - £9,500 (LB Richmond upon Thames)
Two men from Twickenham, west London, achieved fame in the First World War for leading their troops into battle by kicking a football ahead. This project tells the story of Rifleman Frank Edwards – 'the footballer of Loos' – who, inspired by the 1914 Christmas Truce soccer match between British and German soldiers, kicked a ball ahead of him during the Battle of Loos in September 1915 and Captain Billie Nevill who, inspired by Edwards' exploits, also kicked a football across No Man's Land as he led his platoon in the Battle of the Somme in July 1916.

Contact: Ed Harris, Trustee, The Twickenham Museum, on tel: 020 8894 5136

Brussels At Dawn
Unity Arts - £61,300 (LB Hackney)
Edith Cavell trained and worked as a nurse in London before being appointed matron of a nursing school in Brussels. When the First World War broke out she remained in Belgium and treated both Allied and German soldiers while also helping British and French soldiers to escape to neutral Holland. Arrested by the German authorities she was court-marshaled for treason and executed by firing squad in August 1915. The project will research the social and nursing history of the time and mount exhibitions and talks at several London venues.

Contact: Lil Warren, Unity Arts, on tel: 020 7684 1826

Writing Home: a learning and engagement project at the Geffrye, to commemorate the First World War
Geffrye Museum - £8,600 (LB Hackney)
Private Arthur Webb documented his army service during the First World War through letters written to his sister, Winnie. His story, that involved postings to India and Egypt, cover his own experiences of army life including serving with Commonwealth allies, and also provide an insight in everyday family life on the home front. The Geffrye, Museum of the Home, will work with volunteers, families, teachers and young people on a learning project about Private Webb that will include use of the Museum's recreated 1910 period room for a story session.

Contact: Janice Welch, Geffrye Museum, on tel: 020 7739 9893

These Dangerous Women: celebrating, commemorating the women who tried to stop the First World War
Clapham Film Unit and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - £30,500 (LB Lambeth)
The project will identify, record and preserve the stories of the British women who attempted to attend the International

Congress of Women held at the Hague in April 1915 which was called by warring and neutral nations to discuss peace moves to stop the war. Only three out of 180 British women managed to attend from the UK, the others being prevented from travelling by the British Government. One of the three, Chrystal Macmillan took part in women's peace delegations to 21 countries and 14 heads of state.

Contact: Charlotte Bill, Clapham Film Unit, on tel: 07971 284794

Black Poppies Exhibition: Southwark and the black First World War Heritage
Southwark Council - £6,600 (LB Southwark)
The project will focus on the contribution of black people to the First World War, reflecting the fact at almost one-in-four of the borough's present population are of African or Caribbean descent. The project will culminate in a touring exhibition that will visit local schools and community venues and volunteers will be recruited to help visitors interpret the exhibition contents.

Contact: Kevin Dykes, Southwark Council, on tel: 020 7525 5601

Saracen's remembers: Saracens rugby football players in the First World War
Saracens Amateur Rugby Football Club - £9,500 (LB Enfield)
The names and stories of Saracens rugby players who served and died in the First World War will be collated for the first time creating a 'roll of honour' for permanent display in the club and also a dedicated website. Many club members at the time enlisted to fight in the former Middlesex Regiment. Current club members will research the project and the results will be shared with Middlesex University and the Rugby Museum at Twickenham.

Contact: Tom Weir, Saracens Amateur Rugby Football Club, on tel: 07956 768 610

Soldier, Painter, Traitor, Spy
Holloway Neighbourhood Group - £10,000 (LB Islington)
Volunteer researchers will uncover details of four individuals from Holloway and their differing experiences during the conflict: a soldier whose father commissioned two stained glass windows as a memorial in a local church; a suffragette imprisoned in Holloway for opposing the war; a German POW who painted the Zeppelin air raid that hit a local pub; and the suspected spies – local bakers whose premises were burnt down in anti-German riots. The stories will form part of a local exhibition.

Contact: Lucy Bingham, Holloway Neighbourhood Group, on tel: 020 7607 9794

The Business of War
Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre - £9,900 (RB Greenwich)
Working with 300 local schoolchildren and young people the project will explore the heritage of the Royal Arsenal site in Woolwich. Currently undergoing redevelopment, the site was one of the country's largest munitions and artillery factories and, during the First World War, employed almost 80,000 people. The young researchers will work with the local Greenwich Heritage Centre and Fire Power, The Royal Artillery Museum. The project will contribute information to the museum, a website, and a community play.

Contact: Chris Williams, Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre, on tel: 020 8854 1316

Notes to editors

To date, 26 First World War Centenary projects in London have been awarded HLF Our Heritage grants sharing more than £1.6m, and 45 First World War: Then and Now projects have shared £390,000.

Further information

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