Lottery grants help North East youngsters explore



A student from King James I Academy lays a poppy on the grave of an unknown Durham solider

Three schools and a community group have received a share of over £38,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for creative and interactive projects commemorating the centenary of the conflict.

From delving into archives and capturing personal memories, to producing performances and visiting the battlefields themselves, the projects will create a personal connection for young people in particular to the forgotten stories and lasting memories of their communities during wartime.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: “The centenary of the First World War presents an opportunity to ensure personal memories, some of which are now a century old, are understood and remembered by future generations as a defining part of our history. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we’re delighted to fund each of these projects through our First World War: Then and Now programme.”

A Centenary Song

Parkhead Community Primary School awarded £10,000 HLF grant

Blaydon

Year 5 pupils will work alongside Beamish Museum and the residents of Winton Court Care Home to explore the war through popular songs of the era.

As well as learning famous wartime songs including *Keep the Home Fires Burning* and *Pack Up Your Troubles*, pupils will discover what they can reveal about attitudes to the war and the impact it had on families and communities.

Pupils will have the opportunity to hear the family memories of residents at Winton Court as well as exploring collections at Beamish Museum and visiting Tyne and Wear Archives to hear about the musical shows that went on despite the war.

Their findings will be used as inspiration for a commemorative song which will be performed at the school, Winton Court and at local First World War events.

All the King's Boys

King James I Academy awarded £9,900 HLF grant

Bishop Auckland

Pupils are teaming up with schools from Geel in Belgium, Narbonne in France and Nurnberg in Germany to gain a local and international perspective of the First World War.

Forty nine former students of King James I Academy died during the conflict and the project aims to explore their lives in particular, as well as the impact on their families and the wider community. A memorial garden will be created as a lasting reminder of their contribution.

The project will take a look at the story of the Birtley Belgians who were first housed just three miles from the school and the impact of immigration on both cultures. A current student, whose Belgian family was part of the Resistance, will also uncover her ancestral story and roots. Another will be following his ancestors who fought on opposing sides (English and German).

As well as exploring local archives, the pupils will follow in the footsteps of their First World War contemporaries with visits to battlefields in France and Belgium alongside pupils from the partner schools.

Students will work alongside the Durham Light Infantry Museum, The Northern Echo and Bishop Auckland Town Hall Theatre & Gallery with an exhibition at the town hall.

Belford: a rural area at war

Belford Community Group awarded £9,200 HLF grant

Berwick-upon-Tweed

Belford Hidden History Museum, part of Belford Community Group will work with theatre group Belford Players, including its young members, to tell the story of the village and its residents during the First World War.

As well as visits to a nearby castle, the King's Own Scottish Borderers Museum and the Northumberland Fusiliers Museum, project participants will delve into archives and capture personal perspectives on the conflict.

The research will inspire a series of talks and open days and a rolling exhibition at Belford Museum will take a look at the impact of the war year by year. Some of the key themes will be the effects of recruitment and conscription, employment opportunities for women, the role of hospitals and convalescence facilities and the war's lasting legacy.

The theatre group will provide a creative insight by reenacting some of the memories and stories uncovered by the project.

Gosforth in the Great War

Gosforth Central Middle School awarded £9,200 HLF grant

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Year 8 students will create a heritage trail and exhibition to commemorate the lives of Gosforth's fallen soldiers and its wartime community.

The area has a range of stories to tell. St Nicholas' Hospital treated the wounded as the Northumberland War Hospital, the Armstrong Whitworth Aero Plant was vital in aircraft manufacture and soldiers used Gosforth Park for military training, with some of them used as models for the 'Response' monument in Newcastle city centre.

Students will also trace the histories of the men recorded on local war memorials and use school registers and archives to focus on underage volunteers and social change. Another focus will be the contribution of Empire troops, with the Gosforth Gurdwara Temple congregation a key source for information about Sikh troops.

The exhibition will take place in Gosforth Library, the Trinity Centre and the Sikh temple.

Further information

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