New National Lottery investment in First World War



Women's' Work: Sharing the stories of the factory women – Women and Theatre

Today, the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, John Whittingdale, announced the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) plans to make an additional £4million available in 2015/16 for communities looking to explore, conserve and share local heritage of the First World War.

The news was announced on board the HLF-funded London B-type 'Battle Bus' as he marked one year until the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

Thanks to National Lottery funding, thousands of young people and communities throughout the UK have already been involved in activities marking the Centenary such as: researching and recording local heritage; conserving and finding out more about war memorials; and using digital technology to share the fascinating stories they uncover. This new money will help even more people get involved to explore a greater range of stories including those surrounding the Battle of the Somme.

Culture Minister John Whittingdale said: "I am very pleased that these funds will be allocated to communities across the UK, helping people to learn more about their local heritage and the First World War. We must never forget the sacrifices made by those at home and on the Western Front who served this country so bravely. These important projects will help us honour them."

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of the HLF, said: “The demand for National Lottery funding for First World War projects has been phenomenal, so much so we’ve decided to make extra money available. This will mean in particular that more young people can explore the momentous events of a war that shaped our nation, Europe and the world. Next year marks the centenary of the Battle of Somme and if groups want support for projects in 2016, they need to start thinking about applying now.”

The £4m is available through HLF’s First World War: then and now programme which launched in 2013 and will run until 2019. It forms part of the Government’s Centenary programme and provides grants of £3,000 - £10,000 to local community projects.

The programme has been incredibly successful with more than 900 grants so far awarded totalling over £7million.

Projects funded include:

The Empire needs men – Narrative Eye

Narrative Eye worked with local black and minority ethnic communities in Tottenham and Walthamstow, London to create an interactive world map that shows the diversity of the people who fought in the First World War. The project encouraged local people to discover how the countries they are from or have family links to participated in the conflict. As part of the project individuals researched their personal ancestry to see if any of their relatives fought in the war.

Yours Sincerely – North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency

20 young people from North Tyneside explored how the First World War had a lasting impact on the lives of local residents and how it changed the roles in families. They explored personal stories of soldiers on the front line by collecting letters sent by them to loved ones back home. They composed replies inspired by what they learnt from the Discovery Museum's Box of Delights World War One collection and from guest speakers from Remembering the Past Resourcing the Future (RPRF) and the Tynemouth World War One Commemoration project.

Women’s’ Work: Sharing the stories of the factory women – Women and Theatre

20 women aged 18-65 from Birmingham’s Small Heath explored the experiences of women working in factories during the First World War, including the local Small Arms (BSA) factory in Small Heath. Their research was shared through theatre performances, a touring exhibition and a digital archive.

Football and the First World War – Scottish Football Museum

This project conserved and made available to the public the archive of 16th Service Battalion, Royal Scots, who were more famously known as McCrae's Battalion.

World War 1 In the Garw Valley - Garw Valley Heritage Association

Volunteers researched the effects of the First World war on the mining community of the Garw Valley. They looked into the lives of men who went to war, as well as the role of women played. Their findings were shared with the wider community through an exhibition and a booklet. They also gave talks to local children.

To find out how to apply for funding visit our First World War: then and now programme page. If a group needs a grant of more than £10,000 it can apply to HLF through its open programmes, more details are available at our Understanding the First World War feature.

Notes to editors

B-type Battle Bus

Introduced into service in 1910, at the time the B-type was the world's first reliable mass-produced motor bus. By 1914 nearly 2,500 B-types were in service on 112 bus routes. In 1914 B-type buses were commandeered into military service along with their civilian drivers and mechanics. With their windows boarded up and painted khaki to disguise their bright red livery, over 1,000 London buses were deployed for use on the Front Line. They were used to transport troops, and also served as ambulances and even mobile pigeon lofts enabling messages to be sent from the Front Line back to headquarters.

In early 2014, £750,000 of National Lottery money enabled one of the four remaining B-types to be restored as part of the nation's First World War commemorations. In September 2014, B-type No. B2737 was transformed into its wartime 'Battle Bus' livery and travelled to the Western Front visiting Ypres, Arras and Passchendaele to pay respects to the sacrifices made by so many during the First World War. For more information visit the London Transport Museum website.

Other HLF-funded First World War projects include:

- First World War Galleries, Imperial War Museum London - £6.5m
- The Yorkshire Film Archive – £52,400
- HMS Caroline, the last surviving First World War battleship - £12m
- Herts at War -£98,400
- HMS M33, the only survivor of the Gallipoli campaign – £1.75m
- 1914 London B-type 'Battle' Bus, which drove out to the Western Front - £750,000

Further information

Please contact Katie Owen, HLF Press Office. on tel: 020 7591 6036. Out of hours mobile: 07973 613 820.



Battle Bus transformation project completed



War ‘Battle Bus’

Professor Mark Connelly

Understanding the shadows of the Somme