

**Notes for meeting of the Leicestershire WW1 Centenary
Reference Group held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester,
Tuesday 5 May 2015**

Present:

Murray Colville (Chair)	Vice Lord-Lieutenant
Sarra Jenkins	Loughborough Grammar School
Peter Carr	Deputy Lieutenant
Michael Pearson	Deputy Lieutenant
Pam Posnett	County Councillor & Chair, Support to Armed Forces C'ttee
John Sutton	The Western Front Association
Franne Wills	Century of Stories
Louise Sharples	Century of Stories
Sally Coleman	Heritage Manager, Leicester City Council
Daniel Routt	The Woodland Trust
Resham Sandhu	Sikh Welfare Society
Liz Blood	War Memorials Officer, LCC
Colin Hyde	East Midlands Oral History Archive
Tim Webster	Leicestershire Lieutenancy
Ben Holihead	Committee Officer

Apologies:

Alison Clague	Charnwood Museum
Amanda Hanton	Century of Stories
Lady Gretton	Lord-Lieutenant
William Hurrell	Chair of LCC Veterans' Associations network meetings
Col Phil Watson	Commandant, LN&RACF
Craig Blackman	Loughborough Grammar School
Richard Cole	Chair, EMRF&CA, Leics & Rutland
Richard Lane	Royal Tigers Association

11. Welcome by the Vice Lord- Lieutenant.

Colonel Murray Colville welcomed all those present.

12. Notes of the previous meeting and any Matters Arising.

That the notes of the meeting held on 1 December 2014 be approved subject to minute 9 being amended as follows:-

9. Sally Coleman distributed a leaflet produced by Leicester City Council entitled 'Leicester Remembers The Great War'. She informed the Group that the website had been revised and also discussed how libraries had

been getting involved.

13. Standing orders

a. Lord Lieutenant's Award

The Group was informed that the Lord Lieutenant's Award had been a success and was a very lively event. Each of the runner ups and winners had their own stories, with the winner being diagnosed with cancer on three occasions. The students were highly commended for their poems with over 50 entries having been submitted. The next competition would be asking students to research and submit an essay.

It was requested that the winning entries be put into the next bulletin and that all entries were loaded onto the website. The Group expressed its appreciation to Maria McKean and the subcommittee for its work.

b. Fundraising dinner with speaker

The Group was informed that discussions were underway with Bill Harriman regarding potential dates for a fundraising dinner.

c. Community tree planting

Over 8000 trees had been planted at 40 different schools as part of the community tree planting project. There were also four centenary woods being planted in four countries which would be subject to a significant advertising campaign. The Group was informed that in 2016 more focus would be made on ancestry research.

There was due to be a WW1 ceremony in Parliament. An update would be provided on this in due course.

d. Oral History Archive

The Oral History Archive was now available online with website hits being in the hundreds. These had recently been used in a book, and another book had been written on memories of war which looked at why the recruitment in Leicestershire was lower than other areas. The Group was reminded that it was not just a city resource but a county resource.

14. Century of Stories

- (i). The Group was informed that Helen Emery had been ill but was recovering. Louise Sharples had joined the Century of Stories team in January and was a valuable member of staff;
- (ii). The project had become firmly embedded in various WW1 agendas around the County, and had subsequently greatly increased the scope of the project;

- (iii). Staff had been trying to reach out to traditional “hard to reach” audiences. An example of this was the work being undertaken with prisoners at Gartree Prison who were helping with research. The materials from this research would be made available as Council resources in addition to being placed in the prison library. Staff had also been working with the homeless centre in Loughborough looking at twinning links;
- (iv). The Group was informed that the social media outreach of the project had been very successful with over 3,000 people being reached on Facebook. Staff had also set up a Pinterest account which had proven to be a success. It was requested that the links to websites be circulated after the meeting;
- (v). Independent museums were being asked to send in any poignant images which would then be turned into a banner alongside a QR code describing the picture;
- (vi). Mini exhibitions had been produced by staff, an example of which was available for viewing at County Hall;
- (vii). The Group was informed that progress was being made into conserving and digitising the records held on the Leicestershire regiment. However this would take a long period of time due to the way in which the documents had been stored. It was suggested that Century of Stories look into future Lottery Funding to support this process;
- (viii). It was hoped that following the success of the lecture on the Sikh contribution to WW1 that a multicultural service could be held during the year with religious leaders around the county. It was also intended to partner with the three faith schools in Leicester to find ways of coming together to mark the centenary.

Following the meeting the links to the Century of Stories website and social media were circulated.

15. Key battles dates and casualties.

The Group was informed that progress was being made toward finishing the spreadsheet of key battle dates and involvement by the Leicestershire Regiment. It was estimated that there would be 9000 entries altogether.

16. Captain John Hills ‘Letters from the Front’.

A blog had been created which published the letters from a Leicestershire officer a century on from the date which they were written. There had been approximately 6000 visitors to the blog and had recently

been featured in the Leicester Mercury.

17. VC paving stones.

The Group were informed that the stone for William Buckingham had been unveiled. It was uncertain what would happen regarding a stone for Captain Gee as his family were insistent that the paving stone should be in Leicester despite not being associated with the Leicestershire regiment. Although Newarke Houses Museum (which houses the Royal Leicestershire Regiment Museum) had been identified as a suitable location, there were concerns expressed by the Royal Tigers Association that this may not be the most appropriate location. This matter will be further discussed with the relevant stakeholders. Captain Gee's street of birth has since disappeared.

18. LCC Green Plaque scheme.

Voting had closed for the shortlisting period. The winners had been selected and would be revealed after the general election.

Following the meeting members were informed that Private William Henry Buckingham VC and Sergeant John Hannah VC had been selected as Green Plaque recipients.

19. City of Leicester and 'Battle's Over'.

There were proposals to hold a series of events in 2018 organised by Bruno Peek. There would be more to follow on this item.

20. Kilkenny and Leicestershire collaboration.

The Group was informed that Leicestershire had a historic twin with Kilkenny, and there would have been many from Kilkenny living in Leicestershire when the war broke out. It had been suggested that these links be looked at with the hope of some possible collaboration. Further progress was to be made on this.

21. Loughborough Grammar School WW1 Stories Project.

The archives at the school had been improving. Children had been encouraged to speak to family members about possible WW1 links with the intention that any stories would be displayed around the school.

22. Updates from members of the Group and any other business.

- (i). A geological survey was underway to identify the origins of the stone used to create war memorials;
- (ii). Members were asked to send anything WW1 related to Liz Blood who can ensure that it was included in future bulletins;

- (iii). Children from the New Parks Youth Centre had been taken to the Staffordshire Regiment museum to improve their understanding of WW1. The children had recorded the visit and following the visit had edited the footage to create a video of their visit. A private screening would be held at the New Parks Youth Centre;
- (iv). A community exhibition would be held on the 26th June at St Barnabas Library. The New Walk Museum exhibition had closed with a concert. There would not be another major exhibition until 2016;
- (v). A three day event was to be held in June on military life in Leicester which would focus on all areas of military history including WW1. A book launch was due to be held on the first day and events around recruitment and site visits would be held on the second day. The third day would consist of a variety of events including demonstrations. Century of Stories was taking part in the event and all relevant organisations were welcome to participate;
- (vi). An event would be held by the Western Front Association on the 30th May to assist those wanting to undertake family research. Further information would be circulated nearer to the time;
- (vii). A history café was due to be held after the flag-raising events on the 19th June which was aimed toward helping those discover their connections with WW1;
- (viii). Discussions had been held with Leicester City Football Club regarding footballing links with WW1. It was reported that during WW1 ladies football had become very popular but was cancelled straight after the war. Leicester City Football Club were supportive of the proposals to discover these links and further discussions were to be held;
- (ix). Members were informed that 2016 would mark the anniversary of the Somme. Events were to be organised around this.

23. Date of next meeting.

It was suggested that the next meeting be held on the 6 July at 2.00pm.

After the meeting, the date of next meeting was changed to the 10 July at 2.00pm.

