

**Notes of the meeting of the Leicestershire WW1 Centenary
Reference Group held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester,
Friday 10 July 2015**

Present:

Murray Colville (Chair)	Vice Lord-Lieutenant
Lady Gretton	Lord-Lieutenant
Peter Carr	Deputy Lieutenant
Ismail Dale	Historic England
John Hutchinson	Leicester City Football Club
Colleen Thorneycroft	De Montfort University
Lynette Williams	De Montfort University
Michael Pearson	Deputy Lieutenant
John Sutton	The Western Front Association
Sally Coleman	Heritage Manager, Leicester City Council
Daniel Routt	The Woodland Trust
Resham Sandhu	Sikh Welfare Society
Liz Blood	War Memorials Officer, LCC
Phil Watson	Commandant, LNRACF
Tim Webster	Leicestershire Lieutenancy
Ben Holihead	Committee Officer

Apologies:

Alison Clague	Charnwood Museum
Amanda Hanton	Century of Stories
Colin Hyde	East Midlands Oral History Archive
Franne Wills	Century of Stories
Louise Sharples	Century of Stories
Sarra Jenkins	Loughborough Grammar School
William Hurrell	Chair of LCC Veterans' Associations network meetings
Craig Blackman	Loughborough Grammar School
Richard Cole	Chair, EMRF&CA, Leics & Rutland
Richard Lane	Royal Tigers Association
Pam Posnett	County Councillor & Chair, Support to Armed Forces C'ttee

1. Welcome by the Vice Lord- Lieutenant.

Colonel Murray Colville welcomed all those present.

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

The notes of the meeting held on 5 May 2015 were noted, signed and approved.

3. Change to the order of business.

The Chairman, having sought and obtained the permission of the Group, varied the order of business to that set out on the agenda.

4. Weeping Windows.

The Group were informed of the intended bid to host the Weeping Window poppy display, which had been displayed outside the Tower of London, to be displayed at the Magazine in Leicester. Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i). It was felt that the bid from the Group would be very strong considering the wide field of interests that it represented. However there would be a number of costs associated with hosting the structure such as insurance, and fulfilling requirements such as 24 hour protection for the structure. However officers were uncertain whether or not it had to be protected by registered security officers, or if stewards could also be classed as part of the security. It was suggested that officers also consider the use of volunteers for the display;
- (ii). The Group was informed that the bid allowed preference for three periods which the poppies could be on display. Officers hoped to have the display in July in coordination with an exhibition at Newarke House and the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, but would also request for the display either in February or November if July was not possible;
- (iii). It was decided that owing to the amount of work involved in making the bid it would be necessary to establish a sub-Committee to carry out all the necessary work which would update the Group at each meeting;
- (iv). Arising from queries the Group was informed that the display had a link with Leicestershire as the paint was made in the County which was then sent to Derbyshire where the poppies were made.

RESOLVED:

- (a). That the intention to bid for the Weeping Windows poppy display be noted;
- (b). That a sub-Committee be established to carry out the associated work for the bid.

5. Leicester City Football Club.

The Group welcomed John Hutchinson, the archivist of Leicester City

Football Club to the meeting. The Group was informed of the work he had undertaken in finding out the contribution of the original football club, the Leicester Fosse, to World War 1.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i). It was estimated that over 50 soldiers from the football club fought during the war, 15 of whom were killed and four were decorated. A series of articles about the decorated soldiers had been ran in the match programmes;
- (ii). A video entitled 'Foxes Remembered: The Story of Leicester City and the First World War' had also been made which looked at the places where the soldiers fought, and included interviews with relatives. The video which had been premiered at the Football Club was available on Youtube;
- (iii). It was hoped that eventually there would be a memorial at the football ground. However Mr Hutchinson wanted to be sure that he had found all of the soldiers from the football club before proceeding with the memorial. It was suggested that it may be best to have a memorial with additional space at the bottom to add more names if necessary;
- (iv). The Group expressed its support for the comprehensive work being undertaken by Mr Hutchinson, and would be willing to support further work where possible.

6. Events and Items of Correspondence.

The Group was asked to provide any feedback or information on previous or future events it had been invited to since the previous meeting. Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i). The Group had been invited to the Beating Retreat event at Bradgate Park to mark the centenary of the Battle of Frezenburg. A variety of groups and organisations would be present at the event including Cadets and the Corps of Drums to raise money for various armed forces and veterans charities;
- (ii). The Group was informed about a successful event where five schools were invited to a WW1 trail which included a re-enactment and a play at the YMCA about a young soldier. Following on from this the children took part in drills at the Magazine before a visit to Newarke Museum;
- (iii). Children in the city had also taken part in an inter-faith event which included talking about peace in their own religious texts and books. Officers were working hard to promote this across the county following the success in the city;

- (iv). Members were informed that an event involving the fire brigade would be taking place in Ypres marking the 30,000th last post.

7. Standing items.

a. Lord Lieutenant's Award

The Group was informed of the intention in the second year of the award to look at the acquisition of stately homes during WW1. However it was felt by the Group that building acquisition would not generate the same amount of interest from young people. It was agreed to instead bring forward the idea for the third year which was to ask young people to research a name written on a local war memorial.

It was clarified that the three winners of the poetry competition had their poems published. It was suggested that rather than publishing all of the poems that the Group wait until after the end of the centenary events to compile and publish all entries for the awards over the four year period.

b. Fundraising dinner with speaker.

It was hoped that a day would be finalised soon for a dinner to take place either this year or in 2016. It was suggested that the funds raised from the dinner could go toward compiling and publishing all of the entries for the Lord Lieutenant's Award.

Officers were looking for appropriate venues and costs for the dinner with tickets potentially costing between £30 - £50.

c. Community tree planting

The Group was informed that the deadline for schools and community groups to apply for free trees would be in September. Officers would be attending a reception at Parliament in the near future.

d. Communications Plan

The Group received a communications plan for 2015/16. It was hoped that the plan would strike the right balance between not doing enough, and doing too much which could result in less engagement. Casualty dates were being published for those with a direct link with Leicestershire.

The media success in the area had been variable depending on whether it was in the city or in the county. Overall the coverage of the centenary of the Battle of Frezenburg had been a success.

8. Century of Stories

The Group was informed that out of approximately 60,000 medical records, nearly half had been scanned in. It was anticipated that the project would be completed by October.

The Group was shown the new pop up posters which were available through Century of Stories.

9. VC paving stones.

As had been previously reported, the family of Private Gees had wished for the paving stone to be placed in Leicester despite not being in the Leicestershire Regiment. They also wished for a statement to be read out at the ceremony as they would be unable to travel to Leicester. The Group considered whether Peace Walk would be an appropriate place for the stone or if where Private Gees was an MP would be suitable for the family. It was also suggested that the stone could be placed in the cathedral grounds.

10. Centenary Fields initiative and Bradgate.

There was no further update on this item.

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

The Group would be circulated a draft of the bulletin at each meeting for comments and items. The next bulletin would contain information about numerous events around the County including a course about the music of Elgar during WW1 and memorial events taking place at Oadby.

The Group was informed that following the success of 'Pack Up Your Troubles' there would be another event entitled 'We'll Meet Again'. Whilst it would be about WW2 the play would begin in WW1.

The Walk of Britain being organised by Walking with the Wounded, will be passing through Leicestershire on 16th October. An event would be taking place at the Stand Easy memorial at County Hall that morning, prior to the start of that day's walk. It is hoped that employers will be encouraged to attend as the purpose of the charity is to seek employment opportunities for wounded veterans.

12. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Group would take place on Friday 18 September at 2.00pm at County Hall, Glenfield.