

**Notes for meeting of the Leicestershire WW1 Centenary  
Reference Group held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester,  
Monday 1 December 2014**

Present:

Murray Colville (Chair)	Vice Lord-Lieutenant
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
Helen Emery	Century of Stories Project
Jack Fargher	Ashby de la Zouch Town Council
Mark Hall	Chief Executive, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Sally Coleman	Heritage Manager, Leicester City Council
Robert Martin	RBL County President
Daniel Routt	The Woodland Trust
Resham Sandhu	Sikh Welfare Society
Jim Butler	University of Leicester
William Hurrell	Chair of LCC Veterans' Associations network meetings
Liz Blood	War Memorials Officer, LCC
Tim Webster	Leicestershire Lieutenancy
Euan Walters	Committee Officer

Apologies:

Lady Gretton	Lord-Lieutenant
Col Phil Watson	Commandant, LN&RACF
Sarra Jenkins	Loughborough Grammar School, WW1 Lead
Craig Blackman	Loughborough Grammar School
Richard Cole	Chair, EMRF&CA, Leics & Rutland
Richard Lane	Royal Tigers Association

**1. Welcome by the Vice Lord- Lieutenant.**

Colonel Murray Colville welcomed all those present.

**2. Notes of meeting held on 22 September and any Matters Arising.**

That the notes of the meeting held on 22 September 2014 be approved subject to item 6 being amended as follows:-

*6. It was noted that the Trustees of the Bradgate Park Trust were to consider the Centenary Fields initiative at their meeting in December.*

#### **4. Victoria Cross Memorial paving stones.**

Sally Coleman informed the Group that Leicester City Council had been contacted by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) regarding paving stones for Victoria Cross recipients Private William Buckingham and Captain Robert Gee. The Group was informed that the paving stones would arrive by the end of 2014 though they had not been delivered yet. A Sub-Group had been formed to make decisions on the matter and it was decided that the paving slabs would go on the lawn at the Newarke Houses Museum. The stone for Private Buckingham would be laid in March 2015 and the stone for Captain Gee in November 2017. It was requested that there was consistency on the format of stone laying ceremonies across the region and that guest lists be arranged. Mark Hall informed the Group that the paving stone for Sergeant William Boulter was due to be laid in July 2016. The Group requested confirmation of the dates on which the stones would be laid.

Jack Fargher explained that there were issues surrounding the paving stone for Dmr Philip Bent who had been a pupil of Ashby Grammar School and therefore had strong local links. However, DCLG had advised that decisions were based on the person's place of birth and as such the paving stone for Philip Bent would be going to the National Arboretum at Alrewas as he was a Canadian national. Liz Blood suggested that it would be helpful if it could be demonstrated that Philip Bent had ties to Leicestershire and therefore his paving stone could be in Ashby. The Chair agreed to email Anjana Patel at DCLG and inform her of Philip Bent's local ties.

It was confirmed that more than one stone can be obtained for a person if they have ties with more than one place.

An issue was raised regarding inconsistency by the DCLG in sometimes contacting District councils and sometimes Parish Councils. Mark Hall offered to talk to his Chief Executive colleagues at the other District Councils to ensure sure that there was consensus regarding where paving stones were laid. The Group was happy for him to do this.

#### **5. To consider standing items of this Reference Group:-**

##### **a) Lord Lieutenant's Award – Poetry Competition (Peter Carr).**

The Group was informed that the Young Poet of the Year competition, open to people aged 13 to 19, was taking place and schools in the area had been notified. The winning poem would be selected by an independent panel on 11 February 2015. Members would receive an email alert when award was launched.

##### **b) A fundraising dinner with speaker (Murray Colville).**

Bill Harriman, the weapons expert from the Antiques Roadshow, had agreed to be the speaker at the fundraising dinner. The date and venue of the dinner was to be arranged.

##### **c) Report on the performance at Curve "Pack up your Troubles".**

Tim Webster reported that this event had been a success and all tickets had been sold out, raising £8,068 altogether. Radio Leicester had put out a 90 minute broadcast of the production and would be airing it again over the Christmas period.

d) Report on the lecture on the contribution of the Commonwealth.

Resham Sandhu informed that over 300 people had attended the lecture and the event was a success. Subsequently letters had been received from Clarence House and Buckingham Palace regarding the lecture.

Resham Sandhu expressed his desire for a multi-faith commemoration service to take place and the Chair stated he would be grateful if Resham could lead on this.

e) Report on Light-up Your Building in Red.

Tim Webster presented photographs of buildings in Leicestershire which had taken part in the Light-up Your Building in Red scheme, and was expecting to receive more photos.

f) An appeal for photographs taken at Remembrance services and parades.

The Group gave its thanks to Liz Blood for her work on the bulletins. The Group agreed that the Leicestershire memorial at Alrewas should feature in a future edition of the bulletin.

g) Community Tree Planting.

Daniel Routt thanked the Chair and Lady Gretton for their letter that was sent to schools. 8,000 trees had been planted across different communities. Daniel invited the Chair and Lady Gretton to take part in tree planting.

h) WW1 Oral History archive.

Unfortunately Colin Hyde was not able to attend the meeting and therefore not able to present this item. Liz Blood informed the Group that she was aware that Colin had put some content on his website and was planning for a release of this.

*(It was subsequently confirmed that the content was live on the EMOHA website).*

i) Century of Stories (Helen Emery).

Helen Emery informed the Group that there had been an excellent response to the project. Several History Cafes had been held and John Sutton had been in attendance. Engagement had taken place with Loughborough Grammar School and six Hard to Reach groups including those with learning disabilities. A visit had taken place to the History Group at Gartree Prison who were looking at talent that was lost and found due to the war.

The first meeting of the Academic Panel was due to take place on 2 December 2014. Sharing days were to take place at Donington le Heath Manor House and an interfaith sharing day was proposed for summer 2015.

## **6. Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.**

The Chair discussed some of the wider events that would be taking place. Nationally there would be the Gallipoli commemorations and locally there would be events in remembrance of the battles of Hohenzollern Redoubt and Friezenburg Ridge.

The Somme and Jutland remembrance events would take place in 2016. A cathedral service in remembrance of the Battle of the Somme was discussed, including whether it should be combined with another event. The Chair was of the view that it should be a separate event which should take place on Friday 1 July 2016. The details of this would be confirmed at a later date.

Robert Martin informed the Group that there would be a Gallipoli service in Leicester in April 2015.

## **7. Centenary Fields Initiative.**

Tim Webster provided clarification around two separate initiatives; the Centenary Woods Project organised by the Woodland Trust, and the Fields in Trust (Playing Fields Association) scheme.

## **8. Key battle dates and casualties.**

A spreadsheet compiled by John Sutton had been circulated and he clarified that the Battle of the Somme was a generic name for several battles and that he had broken the casualty figures down into each individual battle.

The Chair advised that Tweets of casualties were being published daily but more followers were needed to raise awareness. He requested that people forward the Tweets on to people they know.

The Group was notified that Leicester Cathedral had been including casualties from WW1 in their daily prayers.

## **9. Updates from members of the group and any other business.**

Michael Pearson informed the Group that the communications group would be meeting again to consider 2015 priorities.

Jim Butler described the university strategy for the next 4 years which comprised of the following:-

- 2015 5<sup>th</sup> Northern general and medicine in wider war context.
- 2016 Conscription and conscientious objectors.
- 2017 USA entering the war and the departure of Russia.
- 2018 Final chapter of WW1 and ongoing commemorations.

Resham Sandhu raised the possibility of a project regarding how WW1 affected countries in the Middle East such as Iraq and Syria. The Chair advised that Resham could get together with Colonel Martin and arrange a forum.

Sally Chapman 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.

Tim Webster informed the Group of the English Heritage art competition which was open to primary and secondary schools. Discussion took place regarding whether students from Welbeck College would be able to enter but it was concluded that they would not as sixth form colleges were classed as further education institutions.

#### **10. Date of 2015 Meetings.**

The Group approved the proposed future meeting dates and agreed for the meetings to start at 10.00am.

**11:00am – 12:10**