

WE MADE SURE IT WASN'T ALL OVER BY CHRISTMAS 2014



Gateways to the First World War is one of five public engagement centres established in 2014 with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The AHRC established these centres to “act as beacons for community outreach, engagement and collaboration at a local/regional and a UK-wide scale between research organisations and researchers and community groups, including young people, who are interested in researching and commemorating the First World War...” A key focus of this initiative was to support community projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)¹.

THE GATEWAYS CORE TEAM²



Prof. Mark Connelly
(Director, Kent)



Prof. Brad Beaven
(Portsmouth)



Dr Helen Brooks
(Kent)



Dr Sam Carroll
(Community Heritage
Researcher, Kent)



Dr Zoë Denness
(Research Centre
Manager, Kent)



Prof. Alison Fell
(Leeds)



Dr Emma Hanna
(Kent)



Prof. Lucy Noakes
(Essex)

Between 2014 and 2019, Gateways supported community engagement activities to connect academic and public histories of the First World War (WWI) and its legacy by:



1. Helping community organisations secure funding for WWI projects and supporting community researchers across the UK, from Tottenham to Scotland, from Cardiff to Hull.



2. Enriching public understanding of the impact and legacies of WWI by co-producing research between academic researchers and the community.



3. Developing collaborations for long-term relationships, practices, resources and structures between academic and public historical research.

¹ Changed its name to The National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2019.

² Also Dr Dan Todman, QMUL, who left the project at the end of Phase 1.

I. HELPING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS SECURE FUNDING FOR WWI PROJECTS AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS ACROSS THE UK WITH EXPERTISE, SKILLS AND RESOURCES



Since 2014, Gateways has supported **73 organisations from 53 UK constituencies** to make applications to the HLF and the Arts Council.

The total amount of funding awarded to these projects is **£2,314,502**.

Most projects used local experiences of WWI as a starting point for research. Other projects explored British Empire experiences, medical histories, wartime industries, transport, childhood, experiences of women and ethnic minorities, sport, naval history, citizenship, religion, mental health, disability history, performance history and war legacies.

THE GATEWAYS TEAM SUPPORTED PROJECTS BY:



Encouraging community groups to connect with diverse communities and create imaginative outputs.



Locating academic expertise and advice from the centre's network.



Providing letters of support to HLF applicants looking for skills, training and speakers.

Outputs included exhibitions, performances, films, websites, apps, training and events.

The Gateways team supported



79 EVENTS

organised by HLF projects by delivering expert talks and hosting archive visits, as well as supporting applications to HLF via training, networking, and showcasing opportunities.

TESTIMONIALS FROM HLF-FUNDED PROJECTS:



I think having a Community Heritage Researcher (Sam Carroll) has really boosted the profile of all of our projects...to have an extra tier of support has really made a massive difference."

(Nicola Bengel, Strike A Light)



Gateways really supported us well and what I particularly liked were the follow ups we received tracking our progress and offering resolution to any challenges we faced."

(Shepherd Chengeta, Frehom Foundation)



[The archive and research session] certainly benefited our project as volunteers came away enthused, empowered to use the archives, and with the skills to explore the collection at the Imperial War Museum further..."

('Far From the Western Front' project)



The centre's events programme has been central to engaging with communities and providing access to research expertise. Throughout the project, **Gateways collaborated on 155 events** from workshops and study days to performances, screenings and lecture concerts.

FEEDBACK FROM EVENT PARTICIPANTS:



...so thankful to you and Mark for the extraordinary catalyst and inspiration provided by Gateways events."

(Andrew Dawson, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury)



Have attended several events, found them useful as have had access to professional historians and accurate research. They have also been useful for networking with other projects."

(Darienne Price, Screen South)



2. ENRICHING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPACT AND LEGACIES OF WWI BY CO-PRODUCING RESEARCH BETWEEN ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS AND THE COMMUNITY



Gateways facilitated engagement between communities and researchers by setting up the **Research Network which has 78 members from 33 UK institutions.**

Members provide guidance for community researchers and support for Gateways or community events.

The Gateways Research Fund was launched in Jan 2015 and offered up to £15,000 (fEC) for Research Network members collaborating with community partners. A total of **£279,277** (fEC) was awarded to **20 collaborative research projects** involving 38 researchers at 20 UK research institutions and 30 community organisations.

Outputs of the Fund included: 30+ community engagement events, including training workshops, study days, school visits and presentations; 9 exhibitions; 9 digital outputs; 6 books; 5 academic articles; 4 booklets; 4 heritage trails / tours; 1 film; 1 song; 1 teaching pack; 1 successful AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement application.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

“ The project “has helped us and local residents to...reduce social isolation - brought people of all ages together...”

(Radian: Swaythling in the Great War project, led by Dr Eleanor Quince, Southampton University)

“ Our volunteers have grown in terms of skills learnt and also developed soft outcomes in terms of increased confidence and self-esteem.”

(Chichester Community Development Trust: Chichester in the Great War project, led by Dr Ross Wilson, University of Chichester)

DURING PHASE 2 OF THE PROJECT, TEAM MEMBERS WORKED WITH VOLUNTEER RESEARCHERS ON CROWDSOURCING PROJECTS:

- ▶ **Prof. Alison Fell:**
Tracing the Belgian Refugees - an international project creating a detailed database.
- ▶ **Prof. Lucy Noakes:**
Commonwealth War Graves Commission records project - cemetery records investigated in detail.
- ▶ **Dr Brad Beaven:**
Mapping the Battle of Jutland - impact of the Battle of Jutland on British society through the sailor communities who lost their lives in the conflict. Output: interactive online map.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS IN CROWDSOURCING PROJECTS:

“ [I found] the entire ‘Gateways to the First World War’ team...to be welcoming, supportive and genuinely interested in the various skills and knowledge that each volunteer brought to the table.”

(Volunteer, Visiting and Revisiting the Western Front project)

“ Definitely more confident in historical research... Great support. Excellent communication methods.”

(Volunteer, Great War Theatre project)

“ The opportunity to interact with a wider number of researchers and to work with not only the University of Portsmouth but also the National Museum of the Royal Navy was certainly a valuable experience.”

(Portsdown U3A, partner on Mapping the Battle of Jutland project)

3. DEVELOPING COLLABORATIONS FOR LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS, PRACTICES, RESOURCES AND STRUCTURES BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Gateways established strong partnerships with local, national and international organisations. The centre collaborated on activities with **65 partners**, including:



The centre worked with researchers and community partners from **21 countries**, including researchers from South Africa and Canada. Moreover, the connections between Belgian and UK experiences of WWI have been highlighted by the Tracing the Belgian Refugees digital research project developed with additional AHRC funding.



FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY BATTLEFIELD TOURS PROGRAMME

A national education programme led by UCL Institute of Education

Prof. Connelly contributed to the travel pack and podcast series of the Institute of Education's WWI Battlefields Tours. Team members participated in the Department for Education's The Great War Debate series for secondary school students.

Gateways collaborated with Kent University to support a WWI in Schools Commemoration Project to engage students and teachers in the WWI centenary. **The project engaged with 22 schools and nearly 1600 participants:**



95% of the schools worked with were non-selective.



55% of the students came from areas of 'high deprivation'.

After the project:

92% students reported an increased interest in the WWI

75% of students reported an interest in humanities generally

SUPPORTING THE UK GOVERNMENT WITH TWO MAJOR COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS:

► July 2016, Heaton Park in Manchester

Supported the National Commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme, organised by DCMS, Manchester City Council and HLF. The team advised on the 'Experience Field' event, where **212 academics** and volunteers told stories of life on the home and western fronts in 1916. Dr Hanna advised on popular WWI songs for the Evening Concert, featuring a **300 school children** choir and attended by **12,000 people**.

► July 2017, Tyne Cot Cemetery

Supported DCMS commemorations of the Battle of Passchendaele, which included a multimedia event in the Market Square, Ieper, and a commemorative service. Prof. Connelly offered historical advice, and he and Dr Helen Brooks wrote a performance for the event. The events were attended by over **4,000 descendants** of soldiers who fought in the battle.

FEEDBACK FROM DCMS ON GATEWAYS' SUPPORT FOR SOMME100:



Team members "provided invaluable assistance both in helping us to shape our commemorative activity and directly providing content... Gateways to the First World War has proved to be an invaluable resource. We couldn't have done it without them."

(Sara Robinson, Project Manager, Somme100 Manchester)

The impact of Gateways has reached deep and wide into the community and this would have been impossible without support from the AHRC. Having built up a wealth of experience and a huge network of partners, we look forward to exploring more collaborations.



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