

New First World War community research centre opens at the University of Birmingham

Posted on Thursday 20th March 2014

The University of Birmingham will tomorrow (Friday) launch a centre dedicated to supporting public projects relating to the First World War.

It is one of five First World War '**Engagement Centres** (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/WW1-and-its-legacy/Pages/World-War-One-Engagement-Centres.aspx>)' around the UK, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The universities collaborating on the project are: Birmingham, Kent, Queen's University Belfast, Hertfordshire and Nottingham.

A key focus of the centres will be to provide UK-wide support for community groups funded through a range of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grants, particularly its new £6 million '**First World War: Then and Now** (<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/FirstWorldWarThenandNow.aspx#.U0e43KhdWSo>)' community grants scheme.

The centres will form a part of the First World War Centenary Partnership, led by Imperial War Museums, and will complement other AHRC activities related to the centenary, including its collaboration with the BBC's World War One at Home project.

Professor Ian Grosvenor commented: "It is great news for the University to be chosen as the lead for one of the Engagement Centres. The Centre and its attendant projects are about marking a significant event in history, but also offer opportunities for outward looking universities such as Birmingham to engage with the wider community and build relationships that will be important for the future".

Karen Brookfield, Deputy Director (Strategy) at HLF, said: "We know just how valuable access to university researchers can be for communities exploring their local heritage. It provides them with additional skills and confidence to bring an extra dimension to their projects. HLF has already funded hundreds of community projects exploring aspects of the First World War and we're excited to see how these will develop further with the help of this unique partnership."

The University of Birmingham research will focus on voices of war and peace; themes to be researched include gender on the home front and the issue of religion and belief led by the University's Dr Michael Snape.

The Engagement Centres are funded through a joint initiative of the cross-Research Council Connected Communities programme and the AHRC's Care for the Future theme.

For further information please contact: the University of Birmingham **Press Office** (<mailto:pressoffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk>) on +44 (0)121 414 6029

Notes to editors

- The launch of the University of Birmingham's First World War Engagement Centre will take place from midday-12.30 at the Library of Birmingham. For further information please contact the University **press office** (<mailto:pressoffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk>) on +44 (0)121 414 6029.
- For information about the other Centres please visit the **AHRC website** (<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/WW1-and-its-legacy/Pages/default.aspx>).
- To contact the University of Birmingham Centre directly please email any enquiries to **vowap@contacts.bham.ac.uk** (<mailto:vowap@contacts.bham.ac.uk>).
- Birmingham City Council, academic institutions, museums, arts centres and theatres have together created a **programme of cultural events and activities** (<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/ww1>) to commemorate the 100th anniversary of First World War. Civic events will take place the weekend of 3 August, including a two minutes' silence. Most of the events confirmed so far will take place in 2014/15 but further events will be programmed up to 2018 as part of the commemoration.

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