



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport



## First World War centenary programme 2014-2018 Guide to engaging local communities



# Introduction

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**2014 marks 100 years since the start of the First World War and throughout the centenary (2014-2018) there will be a national programme of commemorative events, cultural activity and education to honour and remember the lives of those who served in and were affected by the war.**

There are now no living veterans from the First World War. But it's important that we commemorate the four years because of the sheer scale of sacrifice which saw nearly 1 million Britons lose their lives. The war had a considerable impact on the development of Britain and the world today. It helped define us as a nation and gave birth to a number of very significant advances in particular the emancipation of women and improvements in medicine and technology.

The First World War saw servicemen from India and the West Indies to Australia and Canada fighting together for the nation. The centenary will also commemorate a shared history of communities across Britain and its links to the Commonwealth.

We want people to find out how the First World War shaped our society and continues to touch our lives at a personal level, in our local communities and as a nation.

To do this, there are a number of initiatives people can get involved in locally:

- Commemorative events throughout the centenary to provide opportunities to reflect on those who served and to honour their memory
- A national cultural programme, as well as local initiatives, to help the public get directly involved in the commemoration
- School battlefield visits to help young people connect with the centenary

There will also be the opportunity to:

- Join in online through social media
- Help deliver a lasting legacy in the years that follow the centenary

# Engaging at a local level

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**The First World War is a local story as well as part of our nation's history. Every city, town and village was touched by it: by the soldiers who fought, the people who stayed behind, and the businesses that helped with the war effort.**

Telling people in your own area about the centenary and encouraging them to share their stories is really important and brings many benefits:

- A sense of community
- People can relate to things that happened nearby and to their local places – makes them feel part of it
- Local groups will have access to historical documents that you can use
- Engage people more easily through groups, schools, local media

## Who to engage with

We want to reach as many people as possible. To do that we've carried out research to find out which people are interested in finding out about the First World War, and who is most likely to pass on the message to others. These groups are the people we think would be best to engage with:

- Young people aged 11-16
- Parents of school age children
- Community groups

## How to reach them

There are lots of ways to reach people in your area. Think about where they get their information locally and use those outlets to get your message across. Here are some you could try:

- Community groups
- NCT
- WI
- Scouts/Guides
- Youth clubs
- Civil societies
- Local history groups (British Association of Local History Societies)

- County archaeological and historical societies
- Parish centenary projects
- Family history groups
- Ex-service groups
- Pensioner clubs
- Schools
- Libraries, county record offices and museums
- Local authority Historic Environment Record Advisers (HERs)
- Local media – print, online and broadcast (particularly those aimed at parents)
- Social media – try to target local branches of national groups e.g. Netmums and Mumsnet

### Things to tell them

It will be helpful to have some messages in mind when you're writing articles, producing case studies or reaching out through social media. Here are some messages you might want to include in your communications activities:

- The centenary of the First World War offers a unique opportunity for the nation to understand, remember and recognise the debt we owe to those who served.
- The First World War was a truly world war. Your ancestors may well have been involved all over the world and played their part in shaping today's Britain and the world at large.
- Get involved. Find out more about the centenary and what your ancestors did in the First World War at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and partner sites, identify and record local sites and places at [www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk](http://www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk) and join in on social media.

# How to get involved

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**Initiatives to commemorate the centenary of the First World War will run between 2014 and 2018. There are lots of opportunities to get involved in these initiatives at a local level, and tell people in your area all about them. Here are some of the things that you can be part of:**

- **First World War Centenary Partnership**

Join and search for events happening in your local area by visiting [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org). This showcases a wide programme of events across the UK at grass roots level as part of the First World War Centenary Partnership. The partnership, established by the Imperial War Museums (IWM) in 2010, is made up of not-for-profit cultural and educational organisations with plans to mark the centenary.

- **14-18 NOW: centenary cultural programme**

The cultural programme will use a wide range of commissioned artworks to engage communities all over the UK, especially young people and new audiences, and bring new perspectives to the commemoration. Find out more at [14-18NOW](#).

- **Paving stones to commemorate Victoria Cross recipients**

Commemorative paving stones will be laid in the birth place of Victoria Cross recipients to honour their bravery, to provide a legacy for communities and to help people understand how their area fitted in to the First World War story. Find out more about the [Victoria Cross paving stones](#) plans.

- **Conserving and restoring your local war memorials**

Advice and grants are available through the War Memorials Trust to help local communities with the cost of repairing their memorials. Additional Government funding of £5 million will help conserve, repair and protect more First World War memorials and burial sites across the UK, as well as sites overseas where British and Commonwealth servicemen and women are buried. The money will also fund new educational materials to help explain the importance of sites and honour the sacrifice made by those buried or commemorated there.

Find out more at [War Memorials](#), [English Heritage](#) and [Heritage Lottery Fund](#).

- **Recording information about War Memorials**

The first thing to do is ensure that a good public record of your memorial exists. The War Memorials Archive is the national repository for historic information about our war memorials. You should send them any new information that you might uncover in your research. Search the [War Memorials Archive](#).

You can also provide up-to-date information on the condition of war memorials – as well as upload your own photographs – to [War Memorials Online](#). This information will be used to prioritise conservation and repair work to war memorials.



- **Listing your local war memorials**

Protect your local war memorial by applying to English Heritage for listed status. Listing would mean that your memorial will have greater protection in the planning system and ensure that any changes to the memorial or its setting are in keeping with its character.

Find out if your memorial is already listed by searching the [National Heritage List for England](#).

Find out about [applying for listed status](#).

- **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

Find out about the existence of war graves on local doorsteps – 300,000 commemorations at 13,000 locations. Or search for relatives who died in the war.

[Find out about cemeteries and memorials](#).

- **Home Front Legacy 1914-18 Project**

1. Find out how the First World War affected people at home with this wide-reaching project from English Heritage and the Council for British Archaeology to research and record local sites associated with the Home Front and to help expand and safeguard our surviving remains. Find out about [the Home Front Legacy](#).

2. Local groups and schools can access a mapping app and web resource to record their observations on First World War-related sites, structures and buildings, along with photographs and associated sources. These will be submitted to local Historic Environment records and appear on a UK map of the First World War sites. Find out about [recording First World War remains across the UK](#).

3. You can access English Heritage's vast archives for information about the [heritage assets](#) in your area.

- **Last Post Project**

Each year during the four-year commemorations, 300 communities across England will take part in a huge music project. For a fortnight before and after Remembrance Sunday, musical recitals will take place in schools, libraries, places of worship and community centres, and people will have the chance to share stories and local memories. Volunteers will play new arrangements of 'The Last Post'.

Find out how to get involved with the [Last Post Project](#).

- **Centenary Apprenticeships**

The National Apprenticeship Service's Centenary Apprenticeship Programme will include a local community action project – giving apprentices and their employers the chance to be part of the commemoration by working with local communities and schools.

The project aims to work with 100 businesses that have been operating for 100 years or more. These businesses will practice skills and/or crafts which existed then and are still used now. They will also employ or be looking to employ apprentices.

Are there businesses in your area that fit the bill? Find out more about the [Centenary Apprenticeships](#).

- **Lives of the First World War**

Discover, remember and share the life stories of over 8 million men and women who participated at the home and fighting fronts during the First World War. The Imperial War Museums' digital platform brings together material from museums, libraries, archives and family collections from across the world. You can share your documents and photos too.

Sign up here for more information [www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org](http://www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org).

- **Battlefield visits**

Two pupils from every state-funded secondary school will have the chance to see where First World War battles took place on the Western Front as part of the centenary commemorations. During the project, the children will learn about local people who fought in the war and will be encouraged to develop related projects in their local area. This will be part of the programme to create a lasting legacy for the community.

Find out more about the [school battlefield visits](#).

- **National Archives' Centenary Programme**

With a vast collection of letters, diaries, maps and photographs, as well as Government documents, the National Archives is a great place to look for all kinds of records from the First World War. The organisation's centenary programme includes the fantastic chance to be part of a project to digitise hundreds of war diaries, as well as:

- Online collections
- Talks and events
- Learning opportunities

Find out more about the [National Archives' Centenary Programme](#).

- **Access help from Heritage Lottery Fund**

Grants from £3,000 upwards are available to mark the centenary by exploring the heritage of the First World War, from memorials, buildings and sites to photographs, letters and literature.

Find out more about the [funding available](#).

- **British Library World War One programme**

The British Library has thousands of items from the First World War in its collections, including poems, photographs, letters, posters and more. Its World War One learning website has published a selection of objects from the war online, along with teachers' notes and new articles by historians. The Library is also holding an exhibition and several public events on the First World War in summer 2014.

Discover [key themes](#) in the history of the war and find out about [exhibitions and events](#).

- **Use the special centenary branding**

Please use our special First World War centenary logo to mark your remembrance activities and anniversary events. Together with Imperial War Museums, this centenary logo has been designed for non-commercial use by you, your organisation, group, charity or company.

[Download the centenary logo](#).

## Other ideas

You can also organise your own commemorations. Here are some activity ideas:

- **First World War concerts at local bandstands**

Music was really influential in the First World War. At the beginning of the war, songs were written to encourage men to join up, and as the fighting went on, music focused on the end of the war and bringing soldiers home. Why not organise a concert for local bands to play the music of the era? Encourage families to bring picnics and make a day of it. Make sure you explain why you're organising the concert and what music will be played. Is there a story behind any of the songs? Put together a

programme that tells that story and explains how important music was to the soldiers and the people at home.

- **First World War talks at libraries and museums**

There will be lots of stories about the First World War in your area, and your local historical society may have stories and archives to share. Ask local historians to tell the story of your area, and ask them to bring photos of what the area looked like and people who lived locally at the time. Or look for stories closer to home – ask grandparents and great grandparents for their reminiscences.

You could also organise readings from books and poems about the First World War – or produce a play.

- **Read a book**

***Children's books***

*Line of Fire Diary of an Unknown Soldier August– September 1914*

*Archie's War* (Marcia Williams)

*You Wouldn't Want to be in the Trenches in World War One!* (Alex Woolf)

*The Story of the First World War* (Paul Dowswell)

*Poems from the First World War Published in Association with Imperial War Museums* (Gaby Morgan)

*Private Peaceful* (Michael Morpurgo)

***Books for adults***

*Birdsong* (Sebastian Faulks)

*All Quiet on the Western Front* (Erich Maria Remarque)

*Regeneration* (Pat Barker)

*A Long Long Way* (Sebastian Barry)

Plus look for poetry by Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and John McCrae.

- **Encourage people to find the legacy of the First World War in their own area**

There are many opportunities to discover the traces left by the First World War in local areas and communities. This could involve asking older generations for reminiscences, or even getting together a group of volunteers to take part in the nationwide hunt for the physical vestiges of the war. *Home Front Legacy* has helpful instructions and a toolkit to help local groups discover and record archaeological remains.

- **Talks at the local war memorial**

Your local historical or civic society could be the perfect place to look for someone to tell your memorial's story. Ask the experts to explain the background of the memorial, when it was built and why, as well as the stories of the people remembered.

- **Talks/activities for local schools**

A lot of schools will have their own activities planned to commemorate the First World War. Here are some more ideas you can suggest to them:

- **Plant poppy seeds**

"In Flanders Fields the poppies blow. Between the crosses row on row". You can buy a Royal British Legion seed packet at B&Q. The charity gets a £1 donation and Britain will bloom with iconic red flowers.



– **Find/create your own war memorial**

There are over 65,000 war memorials in the UK and more overseas. Encourage schools to visit their local memorial or take a look at [English Heritage's war memorials photos](#) for some inspiration. Urge schools to find out more about the names listed on the memorials – who were they, and do families still live locally? Ask the children to design their own memorial – they could paint, draw or build it.

• **Find your local hero**

The Victoria Cross is the highest award for bravery. Over 600 people were awarded it for their actions during the First World War and some of them probably lived in your local area. [Find your local hero](#) (click on *Spreadsheet with a list of all First World War VC recipients, by area* at the bottom of the page) then search online or go to your local library to find out more about them.

• **Create a town or village heritage trail**

Use places associated with the 1914-18 Home Front, from your local memorial garden or war memorial, to the First World War drill hall, houses used as hospitals, munitions factories and training camps.

• **Bake a trench cake**

During the First World War people in Britain would bake and post a fruit cake to loved ones on the front line. Some traditional cake ingredients were hard to come by; you'll see there are no eggs in this recipe.

**Ingredients**

½ lb flour	2 teaspoons cocoa
4 oz margarine	½ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vinegar	nutmeg
¼ pint of milk	ginger
3 oz brown sugar	grated lemon rind
3 oz cleaned currants	

Grease a cake tin. Rub margarine into the flour in a basin. Add the dry ingredients. Mix well. Add the soda dissolved in vinegar and milk. Beat well. Turn into the tin. Bake in a moderate oven for about two hours.

Encourage the children to take a photo of their cakes and post them online, dedicated to "the fallen of WW1" or someone in their family who fought. Tag with #WW1.

• **Make a poster**

[Look at some First World War posters](#) then encourage children to make their own.

• **Light a candle**

On 4 August 2014 people across the country will be invited to mark the moment of the anniversary itself by turning off their lights from 10pm until 11pm, leaving on a single light or candle for this shared moment of reflection, echoing Sir Edward Grey's famous epitaph for the era: "The lamps are going out all over Europe".

• **Photographic exhibition**

Tell the story of local people who fought in or were affected by the war with a photographic exhibition. Get in touch with local historical societies, check your archives and ask people in your area to share their photos. Perhaps you could organise a talk about the most touching photos as part of a special preview event. And you could share the photos even further by creating an online exhibition or publishing some of the best photos in the local media.

- **Story writing / poetry competition**

Hold a competition for older children, to write about life for children in the war. This is a great way to get people to really think about what it was like to live through the war. You could run this competition through the schools in your area, or you could involve your local newspaper or radio station. Think about who you would get to judge the entries, and what criteria you will be judging against. How long will you give people to enter and how will they send their entries to you?

- **Letter writing**

Or write a letter to an **Unknown Soldier**. This is a new kind of war memorial; one made only of words, and by thousands of people. The project is inspired by Charles Jagger's famous statue in London Paddington station of a soldier reading a letter. Everyone in the UK is invited to pause, take a moment or two, and write that letter. All of the letters will be published online for everyone to read alongside contributions from 50 leading writers.

## Feature ideas

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**People love to know about their local area, and the local media (both print and online) will be keen to get stories about how your area was involved in the war effort. You can suggest ideas, or even offer to write the features for them. Here are some subjects your local media might be interested in:**

- How businesses and community groups in your area were involved in the war effort
- Tell a local person's personal First World War story – linked with the Victoria Cross memorials (with photos)
- Encourage people to share their family's First World War legacy
- How to find out about your family's role in the war
- Detail a walk in your area taking in First World War connections (with photos)
- An account from the children who go on the school battlefield visits
- Focus on local businesses running centenary apprenticeships
- Focus on local projects helped by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Focus on rediscovered or identified First World War sites and buildings

## Join in online

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**Social media is a really great way to tell the right people about your First World War commemorations. It's quick, you can reach lots of people and it can be very cost-effective.**

Here are some things to think about to make your social media work even better:

- It's not the number of followers you have, it's whether they're the right people
- Think of it as a conversation – reply quickly if people get in touch, comment on other people's posts and share posts that complement what you're trying to say
- Build relationships

Over the next few months there will be a national social media campaign which we'd love you to join. The campaign covers technology, women, food, communications, sport and volunteering, and families and young people.

On 4 August, to commemorate the day the war began 100 years ago, there will be a candlelit vigil at Westminster Abbey. We will be encouraging people to light a candle in remembrance and to share via social media a photo of the candle with the story of who they are remembering using the hashtag #lightsout

Here are some useful links you might want to follow:

Twitter – @dcms; @homefrontlegacy

Facebook – [Department of Culture, Media and Sport](#)

Tumblr – [Back in Britain](#)

Gov.UK – [FWW Centenary Page](#)

[www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org)

[14-18NOW](#)

Department for  
Culture, Media & Sport  
4th Floor, 100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ  
[www.gov.uk/dcms](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)

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