

## Report on CILIP Local Studies Group Day School 2013

The 2013 CILIP Local Studies Group Day School was held at Nottingham Central Library on 20th November. With the centenary of the commencement of the First World War next year, the theme for the study day was "Focus on 14: engaging young people in learning with local studies".

The first speaker was Brian Ashley, Libraries Director for Arts Council England. Brian illustrated his talk with examples and photographs from his own family history. One of his grandfathers was a motor-cycle dispatch rider in South Africa during the 1st World War and published a book about his experiences. Brian's other grandfather served in India and had also written about his experiences though he had been unsuccessful in finding a publisher. Family history and local history interest may overlap when looking, for example, at illustrations, descriptions or maps with details of (for example) embarkation points, or training camps and what they became subsequently, thereby connecting people and places. The role of the Arts Council in all this is as an agency for encouraging and facilitating creative ways in which such stories can be portrayed. Details of grant funding available for library projects can be found on <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding/grants-arts-libraries-fund/>. Brian encouraged us to look at the funding schemes creatively, even if they didn't appear to be immediately relevant to libraries, and mentioned the importance to the Arts Council of using the arts to engage people in other projects, e.g. a dance project integrated with the Summer Reading Challenge.

In response to a question from the floor about the way in which the Arts Council relates to / co-ordinates with National Archives, Brian said there is a formal "memorandum of understanding" between the two organisations, meetings are held regularly, and TNA Engagement Officers across the country work in partnership with local Arts Council representatives.

Sarah Finch from Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands then outlined the various HLF funding streams available for projects to mark the centenary of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War:

- *First World War: then and now*: grants from £3,000 to £10,000 for community projects, with a short application form and a quick decision
- *Our Heritage*: grants from £10,000 to £100,000 for all kinds of heritage projects
- *Heritage Grants*: grants over £100,000 for larger heritage projects
- *Young Roots*: grants from £10,000 to £50,000 for projects that engage young people with heritage in the UK (note: this is currently under-subscribed at present)

Sarah cited a couple of case studies as examples of what can be funded. *Eyam commemorates the 1<sup>st</sup> World War* focuses on researching the stories of the 72 local men who featured on the Parish Calendar in 1916. Local volunteers and college students are involved, and the project will culminate in an exhibition due to open in March 2014. Press report on <http://www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/EyamcommemoratestheGreatWarthankstofunding.aspx#.Uqm57NJdVc0>

The second case study was a project in Lincolnshire, already completed, in which young people researched and interpreted local history in relation to WW1 and used this to write and record a radio play.

Sarah outlined the elements which contribute to a good application:

- Evidence of need, particularly heritage need
- The needs of the target audience
- How this project would fulfil those needs
- Does the project match any local / regional / national / neighbourhood priorities or heritage strategies?
- What will happen if funding is not secured?
- Does the project need to happen now?
- Anticipated outcomes – for heritage, for individuals, for communities
- Information about the changes / benefits the proposed project would bring
- Information / evidence of the current situation, so that the effect of the project can be fully understood and evaluated

Sarah's "top tips" were:

- follow the application & programme guidance notes
- project enquiry advice is available - take this up and act on advice given
- ensure your organisation has the relevant skills needed to apply for and undertake a heritage project
- make sure the project costs all add up
- look at the project plan and make sure it is realistic and achievable
- assume in your application that HLF has no prior knowledge and will make no assumptions
- ask someone who does not know the project to read through the draft application
- pay attention to detail
- find out about other planned WW1 projects locally & nationally

Sarah then outlined a new HLF project, *Collecting Cultures*, which provides grants from £50,000 to £500,000 to support museums, libraries and archives to develop their collections through strategic acquisition projects. Projects need to include an element of skills development and public engagement. Deadline for applications: 2nd May 2014, for decision in Sept 2014.

After a tea / coffee break, Terry Bracher (CILIP LSG Chair) showed us a video about the Heritage Lottery –funded Wiltshire Black History project, "SeeMe" ([www.seemewiltshire.co.uk](http://www.seemewiltshire.co.uk)) . This was an oral history project run in partnership with the West Wiltshire Community Club. Young people (primary school to student age-groups) interviewed older members of BAME (black, Asian & ethnic minority) communities in the area and then produced creative writing, music, drama and film animations based on their stories. As a result of the project, early Black History relating to Wiltshire has been documented, an online resource for schools is available on the web (<http://www.wshc.eu/education/seeme.html> ), 60 interviews were recorded, three short animated films made, a 10-panel mobile exhibition created, and as a result of the training which formed part of the project, capacity has been built in the community to run future heritage projects. Terry particularly advocated setting aside some money from any similarly grant-aided project specifically for training, in order to provide a legacy of skills in the community for future projects. On a practical note, Terry did not recommend use of video

booths – from Wiltshire’s experience it is more effective to have someone live positioned somewhere behind the camera ready and able to prompt the interviewee when required. Also, holding practice sessions before the “real” interviews gave better-quality results.

The second case study was given by Alison England, Community Engagement Librarian with Cambridge County Council. Alison gave an illustrated talk on the Wisbech Heritage Education Project “Upstairs downstairs: a Victorian childhood in Wisbech”. This project provided an opportunity for school-children to spend a day visiting three centres (Wisbech Library, Wisbech & Fenland Museum and Wisbech Castle) to gain an understanding of what life in Victorian Wisbech would have been like for children of a similar age. The aim of the project was to engender an understanding of the heritage of the town through stories of some of its past inhabitants, to develop a sense of civic pride, engender a sense of belonging and raise awareness of the part the participants have to play in the continuing history of the town. Activities at the castle concentrated on role play, those at the museum, on looking at artefacts, and at the library, on looking at primary resources and encouraging the participants to read, write and interpret information thus providing a variety of activities and learning styles during the day. Wisbech North Ward is one of the most economically-deprived areas of Cambridgeshire with some schools / classes having up to 50% of pupils from east European countries. The £50,000 HLF grant paid for:

- preparation time
- purchase of necessary resources
- specialised teaching costs
- free transport for schools
- development of a website promoting Wisbech heritage as an educational resource ([www.wisbechpastpresentfuture.org.uk](http://www.wisbechpastpresentfuture.org.uk))
- provision of a number of “community days” when the experience could be opened up to the wider community

The project was aimed at Years 5 & 6, children were encouraged to come in Victorian costume and 75mins was allotted at each venue (two sessions before lunch, one after). A Teacher’s Pack was sent out beforehand so the children would be fairly well-briefed beforehand, as time was so short. At the Museum, the children learned about Victorian costume, Victorian toys and (through copies of museum resources) the plight of children in the Victorian gaol. Role-play at the Castle involved re-enacting a job selection interview for a scullery-maid and a boot-boy, and (for the boys) brass-cleaning and learning how to laying a formal table or (for the girls) clothes-washing Victorian-style and learning how to make the perfect pie crust. At the library the children were divided into 5 groups each looking at a primary source for the 1880s (census returns, old photographs, maps, local newspapers and trade directories), leaving 10-15mins per activity which was a bit tight. The staff were worried that the library activities might appear more boring than those at the museum but were pleasantly surprised by how well the children engaged. Those with less-good learning or language skills came along with “learning buddies” or a teaching assistant. Each child was given the identity of a real Victorian child, and had a form to complete about themselves from the information on the resources provided. Initially they found the children struggling with the amount of detail on a census page so they modified this resource by cut-and-paste to give just the information about one family on the resource sheet, with a transcription on the reverse. With the photographs, they asked the children to look at a photo of the place their Victorian alter-ego lived in, and talked about some general scenes of Wisbech (e.g. Wisbech Canal which is now a dual-carriageway, the market square then and now, etc). Copies of two maps were provided: a 1:2500 map of the town to help them get their bearings, look for

landmarks and see where their alter ego lived and went to school and church; and a 1:500 map of the market place which tied in with some of the photos. Three different subject sheets (products, leisure & stories) had been prepared using extracts from local newspapers – the general reaction was horror at the size of the sheet, the small print and lack of photos. Original volumes plus scanned copies of the Wisbech section from Kelly's trade directories enabled the children to find out about their alter-ego's school, church, etc.

Outcomes & benefits: 20 full days over 2 years were devoted to the project, with 23 different and 5 returning schools participating. Approx 1,500 children benefited from this unique experience, and the project received positive feedback from teachers and from the local press. Volunteers recruited for the project have stayed, partnership links between the 3 centres have been strengthened, and many of the children who had taken part re-visited the centres with their families. The project officers hope the project also inspired in the children an interest in and appreciation of the history of their town and fostered a sense of belonging and of civic pride. The website (when completed) will provide a lasting legacy.

Most unfortunately, one of the speakers was prevented at the last minute by a family emergency from attending the day school. I will be very interested to read his power-point slides on "What did my community do in the Great War" in due course, though they are unlikely to be completely self-explanatory as none of the (very experienced & capable) organising committee felt qualified to deliver the intended talk from slides and notes alone. However this did allow time within the programme for a "break-out" session, of which more later.

As a consequence, the after-lunch session was a further case study presented by Anne Sharpe, formerly Local Studies librarian for South Tyneside. I fear my lack of notes may relate directly to the excellence of the lunch, despite doing full justice to the delicious fresh fruit selection to sharpen my senses ☺

"Respecting the past: remembering South Tyneside wartime memories" was funded under the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of the "Their past, your future" funding stream (no longer active) in 2007/2009. Anne outlined the background to South Shields local history service, which for historical / political reasons arising from boundary changes over the years has a rich South Shields collection but much less material for other geographical areas within the service. The area has a rich heritage with a strong sense of place but also a strong sense of loss because of political, economic, social & industrial changes. In the "Respecting the past" project, drama and local history research were used to promote understanding between generations, focusing on the theme of wartime memories. Oral histories were also collected, and resources produced using photographs and material from the archives as a lasting legacy to the project. Outcomes included enhanced understanding of the causes and impacts of conflict, as well as increased knowledge of how to use library services. An evaluation by Leicester University of all the projects funded under this scheme is available on <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/their-past-your-future-2-1> .

Anne's talk had re-focussed our thoughts on the topic for the day, and the break-out session was consequently lively. We were invited to share ideas for things we might do to commemorate World War 1 if:

- a) funding was no object
- b) a modest amount of funding was available, or
- c) no additional funding was available

I joined the group discussing possibilities on a zero-funding budget, which seemed to have been given the largest sheet of paper on which to record ideas! Social media seemed a popular choice for reaching a wide audience at minimal cost. Notes from all three groups were written up and are attached at the end of this report, along with the “wish list” of topics members would like CILIP LSG to address in future training days or other appropriate fora.

The final speaker (and case study) of the day was Rebecca Bartlett, Digital Consultant/Strategist with Ammba Digital. Rebecca spoke and showed slides about Birmingham Library's “Dozens and Trails”, a mobile phone app which works with android or i-phone devices and is intended to reach out to the “I didn't know you had ...” audience. Using a mix of text, images and (in the case of Trails) maps & geo-location, this app presents groups of 12 connected items representing different aspects of the Library of Birmingham, its collections, services and communities. Dozens can be based on personal favourites, surprising connections, or funny coincidences. Trails are similar to Dozens, and consist of twelve items which can be located on a map and take you on a trail around the city. The first Trails reflect Birmingham's important contribution to the anti-slavery and suffrage movements, as well as focussing on what it was like to live as one of the poorest inhabitants of one of the British Empire's greatest cities. A sample list of topics is available on <http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/article/elibrary/dozensandtrails> , but further Dozens and Trails are being released regularly. Smartphone & tablet users can download the app from <http://dozensandtrails.com/> . Birmingham Library also has a Kinect Gesture App on a large screen in their café – this is a stand-alone and they are still exploring ways of keeping it updated – and a Digital Heritage Demonstrator (a joint project with the University) on an interactive touch-table which anecdotally has been in fairly constant use since opening day, attracting an audience with a wide spread of ages.

Birmingham Libraries are keen to share through licence arrangements and for a comparatively modest cost the app they have developed. It can be "re-skinned", and any library wishing to know more should contact [rebecca@ammba.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@ammba.co.uk).

After a tea-break and short plenary session with opportunities for questions, the speakers and the organising committee were thanked warmly for an excellent and inspiring day.

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## **Appendix 1: notes from break-out session**

### **Events:**

#### **World War One – no funding:**

Tweeting photographs, and extracts from letters and diaries across the 4 years of war

Facebook pages for WW1 individuals: soldiers, nurses, civilians

Question forum for children and young people to ask about the war

Poetry readings; Involve book groups; invite public to read

Using WW1 as focus for events you already run, eg: family history IT events, Adult Learning Week Events, etc;

Use online sources such as Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Ancestry, FindmyPast,

If you are an archive or work in partnership with the archive service for your area: use school log books, admission registers etc, to research soldiers on the War Memorial – involve young people

Invite Local or Family History Groups to research and create a display in partnership with the library/archive

Blog highlighting resources and soldiers who served

#### **World War One: some money available**

Quality posters in all libraries – and elsewhere?

Art, poetry, creative writing competitions

Talks by volunteers/researchers on their ancestors who lost their lives

Education packs

Poppy making linked to individual soldiers taken from newspaper obituaries

Verbatim Theatre – interview staff/researchers – create play and play it back to them

#### **World War One: Lots of money**

Education packs

Concert party

Apps

Re-enactments: create a trench, WW1 field kitchen, artist/poet in residence

Research family histories/life stories of soldiers whose portraits are in the collection – publish

Quality displays

Artist / writer in residence – work with local studies, archives, museum – involve public and / or schools – draw material together – focus for debate – creative writing opportunities – performance