



# Making Histories, Sharing Histories:

Putting  
University - Community  
Collaboration  
into Practice



“ History is dangerous.... History is important because the RESULTS of history are still with us.... History is still paying dividends. History is still conferring power on people. ”

Sven Lindqvist

“ History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history. If we pretend otherwise, we literally are criminals. ”

James Baldwin

“ History is too important to be left just to professional historians. ”

Sally Alexander & Anna Davin

## Who we are...

We are a group of university-based researchers (Ian Grosvenor, Sarah Lloyd, Nicola Gauld and Anna Hammerin) who work closely with community groups. We are part of a broader movement committed to citizen activism and to a long-established tradition of collaborative history-making.

“ If history was thought of as an activity rather than a profession, then the number of its practitioners would be legion .... History is the work of a thousand different hands. ”

Raphael Samuel

Our most recent experience is with the First World War centenary when the Arts & Humanities Research Council established Engagement Centres at five UK universities to support communities and heritage organisations across the country. The Centres brought together researchers from many walks of life to share all aspects of First World War history and heritage, and to reflect on the legacies of the conflict in the world today. Working in collaboration with the National Lottery Heritage Fund between 2014 and 2019, the Centres contributed to a wide range of community engagement activities and collaborative projects.





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# Why collaborations matter to us

When people share an enthusiasm, interest or purpose, they bring together knowledge formed through different life experience and emotional commitments. Participants in a successfully co-designed and co-produced project recognise and value the expertise that sits within communities.

Working alongside one another can be the basis for expansive inclusion. If we prioritise specific skills or knowledge, we may miss the unexpected and we exclude people who might in other circumstances like to be there. We lose opportunities to challenge outdated understandings of the world we live in.

**“ There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives. ”**  
Audre Lorde

Collaboration and co-production can be transformative in creating new knowledge and building a culture of enquiry. They can produce something that no single person could craft alone: common ownership of the past through a shared heritage.

**“ He wanted to talk about the use of the past in the justification of the present. About the helix of history, one moment bound to the next. About where the past intersects with the future. ”**  
Colum McCann



# Policy statement

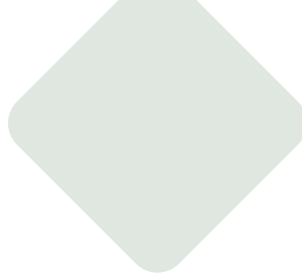
We wrote this statement in November 2019 to summarise the key points that emerged from our work with the First World War Engagement Centres:

“ Heritage is a major resource for empowering communities. In a rapidly changing, globalised world, heritage can foster a sense of identity, security and belonging. Innovative research and community partnerships can address contested heritage and strengthen human connections across time and place. A collaborative model of heritage has potential to shape new policies and practice, creating more resilient communities for the future.

Universities have a key role to play in bringing people together to commemorate events of national significance. They are uniquely placed to connect academic and public knowledge of the past, enabling diverse communities to tell their own stories of belonging and contribution. Universities can facilitate processes that develop and share new understandings that sustain an inclusive, rigorous, rich heritage, and that respond to the challenge of divisive and uncomfortable histories. ”

This booklet suggests how these ideas can be put into practice...





## How can this manual be used?

This booklet is itself a product of collaboration. It shows what collaboration might look or feel like, and how heritage can enable diverse communities to tell their own stories of belonging. Our examples may come from the First World War centenary, but they are relevant in many heritage contexts.

We focus on ten activities. For each activity, we explain what we did, the issues we had to address and what we had learned by the end of the process. We also indicate why we found it worthwhile. In some cases, participants left a tangible historical record (an output); in others, collaboration generated new relationships and ideas (outcomes).

This booklet aims to offer practical guidance and to inspire further ideas. Above all, we hope that our experience will liberate others from uncertainties and problems that we have already encountered.

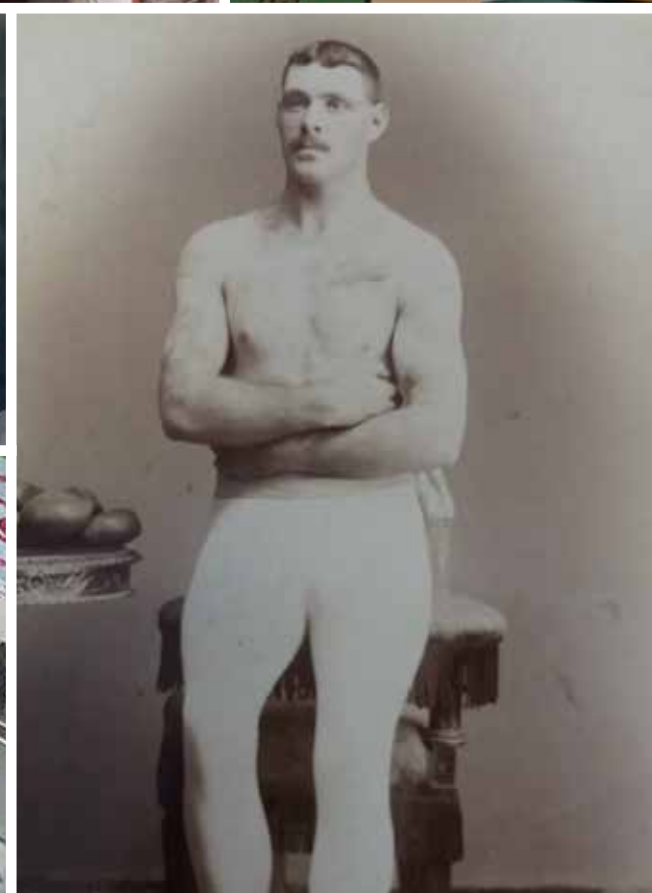
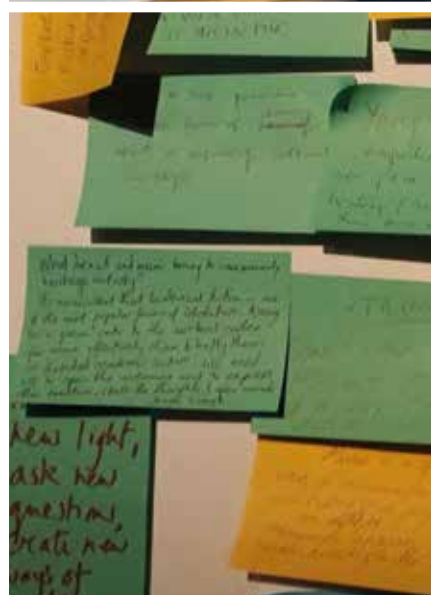
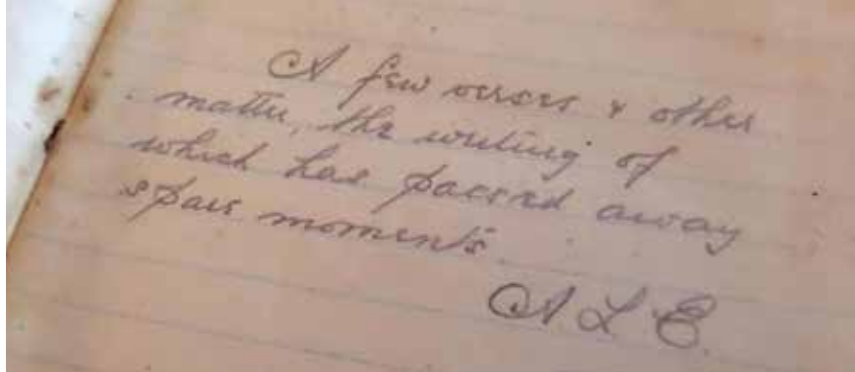
However you engage with the past (whether as a community group, independent researcher, heritage professional, funder, policy maker, or in any other capacity) we also hope you will find this booklet useful in:

- Reconnecting with traditions of history-making that empower people to explore for themselves the impact of the past in the present, including the legacy of uncomfortable histories.
- Recognising the potential for universities and communities to learn from one another and to share resources.
- Challenging universities to go beyond financial and public relations incentives when approaching collaboration and community engagement.
- Imagining how participation in heritage and history can generate multiple experiences in addition to social wellbeing.

**“ We believe that history is a source of inspiration, a means of understanding the present and the best critical vantage point from which to view the present. We believe that history should become common property, capable of shaping people’s understanding of themselves and the society in which they live. ”**

History Workshop Journal Manifesto, 1976







# Principles: Our approach

When working collaboratively, it's important to show sensitivity towards the complexity of communities and to recognise inequalities and power dynamics. Everyone involved needs to ask themselves the following questions: what are we doing, what do we want to achieve, how will we do it, and how will we treat one another?

“ **Nothing about us, without us.** ”

James Charlton

These are the principles we have found important:

- Be aware of ethics and how they apply in the contexts you work in.
- Share decision-making and authority in a transparent way: no mysteries or inside knowledge.
- Listen – with empathy. Make space for different voices and hear what they say.
- Communicate in a way that includes everyone. There is no need to use fancy language or insist on academic titles.
- Recognise the significance of place and community in shaping historical memory.
- Share the legacies of research and citizen activism.





# Principles into Practice

Successful collaborative research projects are ones where from the outset there is an agreement about principles and a commitment to provide opportunities and agency for community partners. These values are the foundation of trust, equity, inclusion, accountability and mutual understanding.

All community research projects, whatever their form and nature, will involve conversations around planning, delivery and evaluation and certain core issues will need to be collaboratively agreed. These issues (some of which will emerge during the process) can be framed around a series of questions to be addressed:

## **Planning:**

- What is the budget and how will it be shared between the partners?
- What will be the time commitment for all participants?
- Do some participants need to be paid to ensure that everyone who wants to contribute can do so?
- What are the project goals, remembering that projects can vary enormously in what they produce?
- Is the project about making something, such as a film, website or booklet (an output)? Is it concerned with making a difference through research (an outcome); or both? Are university-based participants looking for evidence that their research has made a social contribution (an impact)?

## **Implementation:**

- Having agreed aims and objectives, how will planned activities meet them?
- What knowledge and skills will be needed to deliver the project and what training will be available?
- Is there potential for digital methods to enable full participation in project design (co-design) and delivery (co-production)?

## **Delivery:**

- How can participants share new narratives of the past that emerge from the project? Who will be the audience?
- How can new relationships be sustained in the long-term; how can partnerships across community organisations and with universities be strengthened?

## **Evaluation:**

- How will project data be gathered, protected and shared to help inform future activities?
- How will you know whether the project has been successful? What evaluation tools will you use?

In answering these questions, it is useful to remember that community history is not new and that we can learn from past experiences. What has changed is the context, including funding for collaborations with university researchers on co-produced projects. We have included a guide to further reading which we have found useful (see pages 32-33).

# COMMUNITIES,

What's the role of DESCENDANTS in COMMEMORATION?

**SOCIAL Validation**

Cross national **COMPARISON**

SHARING family **STORIES** and THEIR **LEGACY**

KEEP IT ALIVE!

The **VA** INTERGENERATIONAL **ENGAGEMENT**

BOTH for OLDER and YOUNGER GENERATIONS

CONNECTION BETWEEN SPACE, PLACE and TIME



raising **VOICES**

The impact of meeting in **NO MAN'S LAND**

FOCUS on **FEELINGS** and **EMOTIONS**

a **SAFE** space to RECONNECT

making **SENSE** of our **STORIES**

An act of RECONCILIATION, a RECONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS

**EVERYDAY LIVES IN WAR**



**GA** TO **FIRS**

Arts and Humanities Research Council



Everyday Lives in War  
First World War Engagement Centre

Centre for Hidden Histories



# Introduction – ‘Activities’

What now follows is a selection of activities to demonstrate practices we have found particularly inspiring. It is not an exhaustive list. For each type there is a brief description of what we did, followed by the issues and insights that can be anticipated when venturing on a similar activity. Some examples are co-authored with community-based researchers. Taken together, the collection illustrates our experience of collaborative research.







# Studying Objects

## Example: Basketry Then and Now.

A research collaboration between *Basketry and Beyond* (<https://www.basketryandbeyond.org.uk/>) and *Everyday Lives in War* First World War Engagement Centre, University of Hertfordshire.

Text contributed by Mary Crabb, a contemporary textile and basket maker, tutor and maths support teacher. Mary is part of the *Basketry and Beyond* heritage group.

**Brief description:** *Basketry Then and Now* investigated the importance of basketry and willow to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Britain during the First World War. The group was also concerned with the War's long-term legacies in relation to intangible cultural heritage and landscape change.

**Question:** How and where were artillery shells baskets made and by whom?

**Answer:** Handmade by basket-makers, both small-scale and on an industrial basis, across the country.

This was one of the topics explored by *Basketry Then and Now*. Mary Crabb researched the woven cane and willow baskets that were used to transport artillery shells in limbers, attached to gun carriages or hung on the saddles of packhorses and mules. The baskets were manufactured on an industrial scale by firms, such as Dryad Cane Works in Leicester, with orders from the War Office amounting to thousands at a time. To acquire a deeper understanding of the object, Mary used her basketmaking expertise to create an exact replica. This required detailed research into the object's properties and purposes in order to reconstruct manufacturing techniques.

Mary's research journey was captured in a 15-minute film: 'Memory and Remembrance – Shell Basket Documentary': [https://youtu.be/xEWdFfBCL\\_c](https://youtu.be/xEWdFfBCL_c)

**Why study objects?** Looking closely at objects can challenge previous assumptions, in this case about baskets, specifically artillery shell baskets. It enriched existing knowledge about the importance of basketry in transporting goods and weaponry to the Front during the First World War. The project also drew attention to logistics and materials in a world before plastics. Using photographs and original documentation alongside knowledge of craft practice, present-day basket makers were able to reassess the cultural impact of basketry and test out ideas through recreating a historical artefact.

## Issues we had to address:

- Starting from scratch and researching a new area of interest takes time; for an inexperienced researcher there is a great deal to learn about the process.
- Discovering how an object is made is not always to be found in documentation or even in the object itself.
- A funding deadline set a tight timescale for project filming.
- Locating copyright owners and arranging permissions in order to reproduce images of museum objects and photographs, and to use information collected during the research process.
- Sourcing suitable materials for making a replica, or finding alternatives when not available.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- Knowledge of a material comes through experience, which is held in the maker's hands. It takes time to build up an understanding of the material and this only comes through the process of making.
- It's important to collect more information from a primary source than you may first think is necessary.
- Not all questions posed at the outset will be answered.
- The final replica object may not be perfect.
- The learning that takes place during the process is so valuable because it continues afterwards.
- Reflections on the project can suggest ways to revise practices for future research projects.









“ Wonderful to see them gazing at us over the centuries.

I honestly just want to be here every day.

So powerful – easy to forget this was Germany and not Britain.

Great to see the evolving role of women. ”

Comments from exhibition visitors

# Curating an exhibition

**Example: Beyond the Battlefields – Käthe Buchler’s Photographs of Germany in the Great War.** Co-organised by *Everyday Lives in War* and *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centres; the Museum Für Photographie, Braunschweig (Germany); Research and Cultural Collections, University of Birmingham; Manchester Metropolitan University; and Departure Lounge Gallery (Luton).

**Brief description:** *Beyond the Battlefields* presented the face of Germany during the First World War through the work of German photographer, Käthe Buchler (1876-1930). Her photographs are now part of the collection of the Museum Für Photographie in Braunschweig, where she lived and worked, and this exhibition enabled British audiences to see them for the first time. Buchler created a unique series of images of everyday life, with different picture cycles examining the care of orphaned children and wounded troops, Germans at work and at leisure, and ‘Women in Men’s Jobs’. She presented the dislocations of war along with striking moments of human warmth. In so doing she offered a fascinating window on the preoccupations of ordinary Germans, living and working hundreds of miles away from the fighting.

A book was produced to accompany the exhibition: *Beyond the Battlefields – Käthe Buchler’s Photographs of Germany in the Great War* ed. Matthew Shaul (2018). ISBN 978-1-912260-07-2. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2018).

For a documentary film on the exhibition: <https://youtu.be/RwSQNrZODII>

**Why curate an exhibition?** An exhibition can take many forms (e.g. pop-up, small scale, digital). We chose to use a gallery space working in partnerships (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; the Rotunda Gallery, University of Birmingham; Grosvenor Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University; and the Art and Design Gallery, University of Hertfordshire). In Birmingham, local archives from the University relating to its role as a military hospital during the conflict were displayed alongside those from Braunschweig, allowing the different British and German histories to look one another in the face. In Manchester, students responded creatively to Buchler’s images, giving them a new meaning in the present. In Hatfield, a theme of ‘Witnessing War’ invited viewers to record what they saw in the photographs, a process that celebrated the powerful contribution of community-based research to understanding the conflict and its legacies. Alongside the documentary film, working with different gallery venues extended the reach of the project to wider audiences in the UK.

## Issues we had to address:

- Identifying venues, attracting their interest in the exhibition and confirming arrangements: larger spaces can be fully booked 1-2 years ahead. Some galleries require a financial contribution (e.g. to cover the cost of re-painting walls or of installation).
- Obtaining permissions from the owners of the work and respecting copyright (this may require identifying the legal owners).
- Deciding whether to use original images or digital reproductions.
- Logistics of packing, transporting and storage (e.g. storing work pre-installation or packaging during an exhibition).
- Funding and insurance may require advice from someone who has worked with exhibitions in the past.
- Agreeing a realistic time scale, including an opening date; planning cycle; installation; de-installation.
- Curating the exhibition – selecting works to tell the story; choosing what story/-ies to tell. Are there marginalised voices which need to be heard in the exhibition; what present-day conversations might it stimulate?
- Identifying whether there are any issues of sensitivity regarding what would be on display and deciding how to address them.
- Ensuring the necessary curatorial experience at each venue.
- Working with cultural intermediaries who can share expertise on display, interpretation, and audiences.
- Maintaining clear communication with all project partners.
- Developing a learning programme and appropriate activities for a variety of audiences.
- Marketing and publicity.
- Gauging audience interest and engagement before opening.
- Planning the opening event and ensuring that everyone involved in the process is properly acknowledged.
- Documenting the project and collecting feedback data.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 (‘Principles in Practice’).



### What we learned:

- Exhibitions can stimulate communities to bridge the gulf of time and historic lines of conflict.
- Through responding to images, communities and individuals can create new narratives that collapse national boundaries, recognise the presence of others, and aid reconciliation.
- A local dimension can be added to touring exhibitions enabling audiences to more readily connect with the past.





# Organising a festival

**Example:** Legacies of the First World War 'Diversity' festival, Midlands Arts Centre, 22-23 March, 2019. Organised by the *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centre and the Festivals Working Group (including representatives of regional and national heritage organisations, community activists and citizen historians).

**Brief description:** The two-day *Diversity* festival in Birmingham was dedicated to reflecting on public history and heritage. With a focus on diverse stories, participants explored the different types of collaborative work that have been done around First World War subjects since 2014. A mix of activities stimulated broader conversations about future/potential collaborations and how community organisations and academics could continue working together to explore all aspects of the past.

The event was captured on film: <https://youtu.be/jt3wxssX6sE>

## Why organise a Festival?

The festival format created a welcoming, non-hierarchical space for community-based projects and accommodated different forms of expression (e.g. a film, talk, display stand, pop-up exhibition or performance). Through hearing a range of voices, participants and attendees could appreciate better the challenges and opportunities of collaborative work around history, heritage and commemoration. A series of panel discussions, informal workshops, film screenings, and performances provided a relaxed and friendly forum for stimulating conversations around co-produced knowledge and critical responses to history and heritage.

### Issues we had to address:

- Forward-planning.
- Fixing a budget, including a contingency element.
- Liaising with other stakeholders (e.g. funders, intermediaries) over Festival themes and purpose; identifying and mobilising networks.
- Sending out a clear brief to community organisers, heritage and creative workers, academics, and local historians so that they can participate.
- Estimating the number of people likely to attend and circulating invitations.
- Identifying an accessible venue that has a variety of different spaces, the necessary technical support and catering facilities to meet a range of dietary requirements.
- Creating an environment and safe space to raise difficult topics as constructively as possible.
- Organising the programme to address inclusivity and representation.
- Selecting speakers who will engage a wide audience.
- Supporting participants to enable their presence at the Festival: do they need accommodation, assistance and/or financial support?
- Identifying key roles for volunteers.
- Organising logistics for each day, managing the flow of people and staffing the information desk.
- Identifying quiet spaces.
- Liaising with the filmmaker, if the day is to be captured on film (e.g. arranging a series of 'talking heads').
- Including a social programme – e.g. music, creative performances – to bring people together; budget for it.
- Contingency planning: accept that things may go wrong (technical issues; people not showing up, etc).
- Social media – what is it for? Decide who will be responsible; how social media will be used; and plan to troubleshoot any problems in real-time.
- Documenting the event.
- Organising endings and leaving the venue.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- **Choosing the right venue and creating a supportive atmosphere is critical if people from a variety of backgrounds are to have conversations on an equal basis to share new knowledge and respect differences.**
- **Bringing people together can create new connections, with shared experience sustaining relationships beyond the event.**









Nottingham, 10-11 April  
Derby, 12 April  
Loughborough, 13 April  
Leicester, 14 April  
Market Harborough, 15 April  
Kettering, 16 April  
Wellingborough, 17-18 April  
Elstow, 20 April  
Bedford  
Luton



# Tracing historical footsteps

**Example: “Justice Not Charity” was their Cry’.** Disability History Scotland with Jennifer Novotny (Independent Researcher) and Nicola Gauld, *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centre, University of Birmingham.

**Brief description:** Although one in five of the Scottish population consider themselves to be disabled or to have a long-term health condition, their own voices are rarely heard. The history of disabled people in Scotland is seen as marginal or of minimal significance, if it is considered at all. “Justice not Charity” was their Cry’ examined the experiences of disabled people in the shadow of the Great War. Post-war the number of blind people had increased and they faced workplace exploitation and government inaction. Their protests culminated in the first long distance protest march to London in April 1920, with blind protestors converging on Trafalgar Square from all over Britain. This project concentrated on the Scottish contingents of marchers, departing from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Paisley, about which very little is currently known.

Disability History Scotland chose to produce a booklet – “Justice Not Charity” was their Cry’ by Jennifer Novotny – that mapped the march as it travelled from Scotland to London. <http://www.disabilityhistoryscotland.co.uk/projects/>

“ An archive of hope ”  
Harvey Milk

**Why trace historical footsteps?** This approach suited a project where the partners were based at some distance from one another. Mapping a historical journey created points of connection between researchers, including some based along the route. Working alongside participants with complex needs, fostered supportive relationships and empathy. Through these, it was possible to discover and promote new knowledge, and to challenge received notions around charity and disability.

## Issues we had to address:

- Importance of clear and honest communication between collaborating partners.
- Understanding complex needs of individuals and organisations.
- Flexibility around deadlines.
- Difficulties around doing research when there is a lack of information.
- Importance of access to digital resources.
- Building relationships takes time and dedication.
- Empathetic listening to partners; being supportive and going the extra mile to support them.
- For some groups, funding needs to be available up front or paid immediately.
- Finding effective ways to deal with cumbersome university administration and payment processes.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 (‘Principles in Practice’).

## What we learned:

- Researching geography/locations/journeys can be a good starting point for telling stories, as well as for developing heritage trails.
- Making a link between present-day experience and the past can generate research questions previously neglected.
- Collaborative projects can be difficult, mainly because university systems are incompatible with the way that community organisations are run.
- Making marginalised histories visible can be challenging, but is always worth the effort and can be extremely rewarding.



# **'Justice Not Charity' Was Their Cry**

**Dr. Jennifer Novotny**







# Making a Film

**Example: *The Women's Peace Crusade 1917-1918 in the North-West*.** Co-designed and co-produced by Clapham Film Unit; Alison Ronan, Manchester Metropolitan University [MMU]; Manchester Centre for Regional History; Archives+; Peace News; and Volunteer Community Researchers. Funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council via the *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centre.

**Brief description:** The film brought to light the generally unremembered Women's Peace Crusade in the industrial North. The Crusade ran like wildfire across the UK during 1917 and 1918, after an enthusiastic but faltering beginning in Glasgow in 1916 in the wake of the Battle of the Somme. By the summer 1918, there were over 123 Crusades, unambiguous in their socialist, pacifist and feminist message, coordinated by a complex network of women's suffrage, socialist and pacifist activists who appealed to local working-class women.

This project developed out of a previous collaboration between Clapham Film Unit (CFU) and Alison Ronan, the MMU researcher. Their earlier film, *These Dangerous Women*, had focused on the women peace campaigners who travelled to The Hague in 1915. CFU have long tradition of working with volunteers on historical re-enactment films and researching and using archive footage.

Research volunteers from Manchester, Oldham, Bolton, Rochdale, Blackburn, Burnley and Nelson focused on the Women's Peace Crusade in key towns in East Lancashire and Greater Manchester. Feminist historian, Alison Ronan, coordinated the work, with the volunteers contributing to script development and the accompanying booklet.

The film can be seen at: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5e8hvu>

The supporting research, details of the filmmaking process and a copy of the film script can all be found in *The Women's Peace Crusade 1917-1918* (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017). ISBN 978-1-910029-27-5.

**Why make a film?** Combining local research with re-enactment enabled all participants to explore the power of film to tell new stories about a relatively unknown chapter in women's history, and to share that knowledge with others at a series of screening events.

## Issues we had to address:

- Agreeing roles, responsibilities and budget allocations at the start.
- Understanding how university systems and budgets operate.
- Resolving different ideas, including among the research volunteers, about what the project outputs will be.
- Working with large amounts of archival research and distilling that material into a story.
- Taking risks and stepping outside of (professional) comfort zones.
- Co-ordinating groups/organisations based in different locations and geographically separate from the project's focus.
- Managing difficulties that arise when a key member of the team leaves during the project.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- **Making a film can be participatory and inclusive.**
- **Cultural and economic barriers can be transcended when multiple voices are heard.**
- **Learning is mutual: the academic, filmmaker and volunteers needed each other to complete different aspects of the project. Everyone learned from one other.**







## Stories of Omission: Conflict and the experience of Black soldiers

# Making a book

**Example:** *Stories of Omission: Conflict and the experience of Black soldiers*. Co-designed and co-produced by volunteers supported by Recognize Black Heritage & Culture (community group) and the *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centre.

**Brief Description:** *Stories of Omission: Conflict and the experience of Black soldiers* researched the representation of Black soldiers during and after the Great War. The project set out to identify the sources of information available to the general public and, perhaps more importantly, what stories were missed out, hidden, ignored or disregarded, with the intention of 'rectifying the omission'. Volunteers identified areas they wished to research, associated stories they wanted to explore and helped to shape the final look and feel of the resulting publication. Participants acknowledged it was very much a starting point and hoped that the book would act as a stimulus for further research and more projects. The publication was produced in both print and electronic form to maximise its audience reach.

The project was captured on film and documents the enthusiasm of the volunteer researchers as well as their motivations for being involved: <https://youtu.be/diiMJStDNVw>

**Why make a book?** In choosing to present their work in book form, the volunteers left a material trace of what had previously been ignored. They added their own voices to a long tradition of grassroots, activist history. The process generated confidence among the volunteer researchers and a desire to continue researching the black experience in British history.

“ Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. ”

Stuart Hall

### Issues we had to address:

- Finding a starting point both in terms of the project focus and forming a research group.
- Identifying the knowledge and skills necessary for delivering a collaborative research project.
- Identifying sources of support in terms of developing participant skills and knowledge.
- Organising participant access to relevant resources.
- Locating a meeting space and research base.
- Discussing and agreeing research themes, roles and responsibilities.
- Discussing and agreeing a realistic research plan and milestones which take account of the demands on volunteer time.
- Planning for covering volunteer expenses.
- Organising writing-for-publication workshops, knowledge exchange and review sessions.
- Thinking about different audiences.
- Inclusion of visual material, seeking permissions and associated costs.
- Identifying a designer.
- Planning and organising a publication launch.
- Discussing where the project might go next, or whether participants want to develop a new project.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

### What we learned:

- The project generated new knowledge that challenged dominant narratives of the conflict and demonstrated the possibility of transforming the landscape of research through collaborative research.
- Having completed the project, volunteers were anxious to see that their discoveries were disseminated beyond the local area and especially reached young people.







# Putting on a Show

**Example:** *Jane Clegg* (1913) by St John Ervine, Finborough Theatre, London, 22 April – 17 May 2019. Co-produced by Andrew Maunder from the *Everyday Lives in War* First World War Engagement Centre and Finborough Theatre, London (<https://finboroughtheatre.co.uk/>)

**Brief description:** Andrew Maunder researches playscripts submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office during the First World War period. He has uncovered an archive of little-known plays, many of them rarely or never performed. In Spring 2019, he worked with London's award-winning Finborough Theatre to produce a commercial, four-week run of St John Ervine's *Jane Clegg* (1913) using a professional cast and crew. Andrew had previously worked with Finborough Theatre on a production of Robert Graves's war play *But It Still Goes On* (1929). *Jane Clegg*'s plot about an unfaithful husband who embezzles his firm's money and his wife's decision to finally end their marriage seemed unusual war-time fare, but newspaper references between 1914-1919 suggested it was clearly popular at the time.

The play was widely reviewed; 950 people attended performances. Twitter analytics for *Jane Clegg* revealed that content on the show was extensively shared, one account having reached 122,532 other accounts in a 10-day period during the show's run.

An accompanying conference on 'Women, the Arts, War and Work' was organised in partnership with the Women's Library (at the London School of Economics) in May 2019.

**Why put on a show?** Restaging drama of the period is an effective means of challenging received notions of wartime theatre and entertainment (i.e. it is more varied than is often supposed). In this case the play also re-framed existing knowledge about the women's suffrage movement and its legacy during the conflict. Successful collaboration can require attention to thematic details: a play written by a serving soldier and suffragist made it possible to work in partnership with a theatre with a proven interest in the First World War and its cultural impact. The project generated interest via BBC news, local radio and the national press.

## Issues we had to address:

- The challenges of working with child actors who are only available for limited periods and require licenses and chaperones.
- The logistics of producing a commercial play alongside other demands of a job.
- Issues that arise when a lead actor has to withdraw one week before the play opens.
- Marketing the play; it was not a familiar First World War play, rather a piece by a little-known author.
- Recruiting cast, crew and director.
- Financial pressures: this was a commercial production and needed to generate revenue.
- Negotiating with actors' agents.
- Ensuring that legal and safety requirements were all in place.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- First World War plays are a 'hard sell' unless they are *Journey's End* or *War Horse*. The average age of audiences for little-known period works tends to be over 50.
- Being present at key moments of rehearsal and preparation is crucial.
- Co-ordinating all aspects of the production (actors; crew; design team, director, marketing) is vital because this enables a keen eye to be kept on the budget.
- The importance of social media in generating interest in events and projects.
- The importance of networks in generating visitors.







# Creating a conversation about policy

**Example: Policy Breakfast, Cardiff.** Co-organised by the University of Cardiff; Cardiff West Community High School; and the *Everyday Lives in War* and *Voices of War and Peace* First World War Engagement Centres.

**Brief Description:** In 2019, the five First World War Engagement Centres jointly hosted four policy breakfasts across the UK. These were opportunities to reflect on what had been learnt over six years: how can universities, communities and cultural institutions productively work in partnership? Through these discussions, participants co-created a set of policy recommendations related to public history, heritage and meaningful future collaboration. Each breakfast had its own organising theme and was held in a distinctive venue. In Cardiff, the theme was *Heritage, Community and Opportunity* and the location was Cardiff West Community High School - a brand new school located in an area where communities faced social and economic challenges. The aim was to create a space for equal and reciprocal conversations between young people, community workers, teachers, academics and policy makers and to help communities explore public, social and cultural challenges.

**Why talk about policy?** The Policy Breakfast opened dialogue between different stakeholders. Locating the event in a school and having young people leading discussions acted as a bridge between the past and the present. It fostered a very tangible sense of engagement with issues that are rooted in history but alive in the present.

A sense of place and the local are critical to many community participatory projects. Heritage is a major resource for empowering communities and can strengthen human connections across time and place. A collaborative model of heritage has potential to shape new policies and practice, creating more resilient communities for the future.

## Issues to address:

- Identification of an appropriate theme and objectives that resonate with contemporary policy questions.
- Reaching out to multiple audiences at different stages of planning, delivery and evaluation; giving people agency in shaping and delivering the event.
- Organising a programme of inclusive activities; empowering all participants to contribute.
- Choosing a venue which offers the necessary flexibility in terms of space for planned activities and provision of equipment.
- Preparing promotional information to attract an audience and identify mechanisms for circulation.
- Achieving a balance in the audience between community members, academics, cultural organisations and policy makers.
- Catering arrangements and providing for possible dietary restrictions/requirements.
- Attending to associated health and safety regulations and where appropriate public and employer liability insurance.
- Agreeing roles and responsibilities of collaborating partners and participants.
- Recruiting volunteers to help deliver activities.
- Building in adequate time to undertake checks if children are involved.
- Documenting the process and capturing the outcomes, e.g. visual scribing techniques; creative responses.
- Producing a report and/or set of actions to complete the discussion for participants.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- **Achieving the right balance between community members, academics, cultural organisations and policy makers was critical, as was the presence of effective leaders in the discussion groups.**
- **In Cardiff, the ethos of the school supported its students in taking on this role with confidence.**







# Experiencing the past

**Example: Food in Wartime 1914-1920 Workshop.** Organised by the *Everyday Lives in War* First World War Engagement Centre with participation from academics, community historians and early-career researchers.

**Brief Description:** The *Food in Wartime 1914-1920 Workshop* is an excellent example of happenstance. During the exhibition of Käthe Buchler's photographs of the First World War German home front, gallery staff and visitors noted the significance of food in several images. These conversations inspired an exhibition-related workshop with speakers covering soldiers' food, home front provisioning and the impact of the war on the coffee trade. Volunteer researchers attended from a community allotment project working with young people in Glasgow. The Workshop also attracted a German academic who spoke about the Turnip Revolution and malnutrition in Germany, and a Swedish community researcher who shared a long-forgotten story of the women's 'Potato Revolution' in Sweden 1917.

Lunch and afternoon tea were prepared according to First World War recipes. Curried Rabbit, Bully Beef Stew and Maconochie Stew gave participants the sensory experience of being 'transported back in time'. For several visitors, this proved to be a feast for eyes, nose and palate: some were vividly reminded of their childhood, or recalled similar culinary delights being served in a grandparent's kitchen years ago. The Workshop (in particularly the re-creation of a First World War menu) generated media interest, and formed the basis for a multi-disciplinary, international conference in Germany the following year.

**Why re-enact the past?** Food is one of the most fundamental experiences of being human; sharing food is a building block of society. Re-creating First World War dishes connected past and present, making a gut-level connection between wartime and present-day. The experience encouraged participants to cut across historical, intellectual and cultural boundaries to form new local, national and international partnerships.

By providing a safe space in an inclusive, relaxed, conversational-style environment, people were able to engage in previously uncomfortable transnational conversations. The sharing of new experiences challenged received notions of the First World War and re-framed old information about the conflict. Participants left with a mutual appreciation of cross-cultural values and shared experiences, and with a genuine desire to build on the new discoveries of day.

## Issues to address:

- Choosing a venue which offers the necessary flexibility in terms of space and provision of equipment (e.g. for the delivery and set-up of hot food).
- Creating a programme that is inclusive, varied and interesting, especially when cutting across familiar narratives.
- Preparing for the potentially sensitive issues which can emerge from transnational conversations or when historical injustices are made visible.
- Developing promotional information to attract diverse audiences and identifying mechanisms for circulation.
- Estimating the number of attendees.
- Identifying how to support participants to enable participation; do they need accommodation, parking facilities, or specific aid (e.g. wheelchair access or other individual special-needs support) and/or financial assistance?
- Being attentive to the budget: spend the funds wisely and where it may have the most impact (as in this case on the provision of First World War food).
- Securing technical support: set up early and have a direct contact number for a technician on duty.
- Being prepared for contingency planning; accept that things may go wrong.
- Attending to associated health and safety regulations.
- Managing the flow of people on the day; is the venue appropriately signposted?
- Documenting the process and capturing the outcomes.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').

## What we learned:

- **Appreciating shared human experiences can force us to revisit traditional narratives and concepts of war.**







# Reminiscence, Memory and Verbatim Theatre

**Example:** *Voices of the Great War*, Lakeside Theatre, University of Essex, 24 June – 25 June 2016.

**Produced by** Barbara Peirson, directed by Robert Price, written by Annecy Lax from material provided by Mike Roper and Rachel Duffett of the *Everyday Lives in War* First World War Engagement Centre.

**Brief Description:** Historian Mike Roper's project 'The Generation Between' explored the way in which the children of First World War veterans grew up with a war that had for many of them ended before their birth, yet still cast a long shadow in families profoundly shaped by the fathers' experiences. This collection of oral history interviews with the now very elderly 'children' recalling their early lives formed the spine of a performance which used innovative drama techniques to bring the testimony to life. The preparatory workshops brought together director, producer, dramaturg, historians and an enthusiastic group of student actors. During these intense sessions, we worked with transcripts from the interviews to probe their emotional meaning and historical context. The process of recorded delivery allowed the actors to hear the recordings of Mike's interviews while simultaneously speaking and enacting them – a strangely affecting experience to hear young actors matching the speech patterns of the elderly interviewees. It was through this shared, interactive process that the shape of the play started to emerge and the dramaturg was able to select material that resonated with the performers as well as the other interested parties. Verbatim theatre – the use of the actual words of the subjects – allows the recollections of the past to be presented to new audiences in a vivid and authentic way. By necessity, those words have to be edited down into a manageable timeframe and there is a process of selection, but ultimately the voices from the past are able to be heard in the present.

**Why make a play?** Using the young students and actors to dramatise the reminiscences of the very elderly was an opportunity to engage new audiences with existing historical testimonies. Very importantly, it was a way in which the voices from those childhoods could be recovered through being spoken by young actors much closer to the age in which the original memories were formed. Verbatim theatre offered a framework in which historical material could be revived without losing its veracity. The project generated interest via the local press and contacts with history groups; the post-performance Q&A discussions with the audience were evidence of the power that those memories achieved through their embodiment by the young actors.

Mike and Rachel have also collaborated with Age Exchange, Britain's leading reminiscence arts practitioner, on another memory project 'Meeting in No Man's Land' which brought the descendants of British and German veterans together to share their family histories in Bavaria, April 2016. David Savill, AE's artistic director, created a film of the event which can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/ZtOvjVihEFA>

## Issues we had to address:

- Functioning as a creative group rather than as individuals: theatre practitioners are used to working in companies, historians are not.
- Accommodating significantly different approaches to the same material in order to balance the, sometimes conflicting, requirements of drama and history.
- Learning how plays are written, directed and rehearsed.
- Sifting large amounts of archival research to find stories that resonated with the makers yet also remained true to those whose past we were appropriating.
- Copyright – the need to ensure that those interviewed for an oral history project were happy to have their memories shared in a very different format.

For additional information on planning and implementing your activity, please see page 9 ('Principles in Practice').



### What we learned:

- Working in the theatre is not the same as doing history! The difference in motivations and desired outcomes requires flexibility and an openness to new ways of communicating stories.
- Letting go of traditional practices is liberating.
- A more nuanced appreciation of the elderly's childhood memories can be facilitated by hearing them mediated through the voices of the young: they take on a new reality when they are articulated by those closer in age to the actual experiences recalled.
- There are few things as rewarding as seeing young people engaging with older stories and regenerating them in new and exciting ways - history wholly benefits from that injection of youthful energy.



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## Quotations:

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# Images

## Front cover:

MAIN (right): Scene from a fairy tale at Wilhelm Müller's studio,  
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CENTRE: Birmingham City Archives, 'Local History Lesson,  
Handsworth, 1974', *Photographs, Birmingham Schools, misc.*

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## Page 4/5

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BOTTOM (right): James 'Gunner' Moir, Royal Artillery First World  
War. British Heavy Weight Champion 1906-1909 - *Image courtesy of*  
*Lorraine Moir*

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Fen Ditton villagers and soldiers outside cottages in Church Street,  
1914-1918 - *Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge Central Library*

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## Page 12

TOP (second from left): War-blinded servicemen in a basketmaking  
workshop at St Dunstan's School for Blind Veterans - *Image courtesy*  
*of Blind Veterans UK*

## Page 13

BOTTOM (left): Artillery shell baskets stacked for shipping in a yard  
at Castle Donington - *Image courtesy of Castle Donington Museum*

MIDDLE (right): Patients making baskets as occupational therapy at  
the 5th Northern General Hospital, Leicester, 1920 - *Image courtesy of*  
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BOTTOM (right): From 'The Royal Engineers Signals Service on the  
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## Page 14

'Beyond the Battlefields' exhibition opening - *Image courtesy of Adam*  
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BOTTOM: Children standing in line to deliver glass bottles, © Estate  
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RIGHT: 'Handsworth to Flanders Field', Secret City Arts (Mandy Ross  
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## Page 17

MIDDLE (right): *Image courtesy of Anna Kuppuswamy*

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TOP: 1920 National League of the Blind march - *Image courtesy of*  
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Original 120 format monochrome film negative, now lost, held by the  
National League of the Blind and Disabled until 2004.  
Photographer unknown.

A first generation wet photographic print of the film negative is held  
by the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, UK.

BOTTOM (right): *Image courtesy of Tony Baldwinson*

## Page 20

MIDDLE: 'These Dangerous Women' - *Image courtesy of Anna Watson*

TOP & BOTTOM (right): 'Women's Peace Crusade' - *Image courtesy of*  
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TOP: Peace Delegates on NOORDAM 1915: Mrs. P. Lawrence, Jane  
Addams, Anna Molloy. *From the George Grantham Bain Collection.*  
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A black Royal Engineer lance corporal - *Image courtesy of the Kerry*  
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## Page 24

LEFT: Alix Dunmore and Theo Wilkinson in 'Jane Clegg' - *Image*  
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MIDDLE: Dame Sybil Thorndike in 'Jane Clegg', 1922 - *Private Collection*

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Matthew Sim, Brian Martin and Alix Dunmore in 'Jane Clegg' - *Image*  
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'Woman grating potatoes' - © Estate of Käthe Buchler – Museum für  
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'Voices of the Great War', Lakeside Theatre - *Image courtesy of Mijrin*  
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## Page 36

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“ Every [community] historian discloses a new horizon. ”  
After George Sand