



Great War MK Evaluation Report

Arts & Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes
2016



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Executive Summary

Great War MK – From Conflict to Cosmopolis was a heritage-led project involving learning and education, skills development, engaging experiences and interpretation of WW1 heritage. The project aimed to bring together imaginative explorations of the theme of WW1 from heritage, arts and community organisations in Milton Keynes, encouraging members of the public, schools and young people to engage with the history of WW1.

The project has been an inspirational experience for all concerned. Thirteen partners were involved in delivering a wide range of activities, with over 200 artists, 2,000 participants and audiences of nearly 10,000. During the two years of the project, there were textile and art workshops, research trips and school assemblies, dance workshops and performances, exhibitions and open days, live theatre and concerts, film-making and film screening, poetry recitals and new music compositions, and a final showcase.

The quality and range of different activities relating to WW1 has been very impressive. The aim was to make the project as accessible as possible, by providing different types of activity and varied ways of engaging with WW1 heritage. All project partners worked hard to deliver stimulating and engaging activities, and the project succeeded in reaching out across Milton Keynes, both to new generations of participants and to new audiences.

Over the course of the project 380 evaluation cards were completed, a good sample rate across the total audience. Of these respondents, 68% agreed that the event they had attended was 'very good' and 29% that it was 'good', showing that the events were perceived to be of a high quality. 91% of respondents agreed that the event they attended was 'good' or 'very good' at making them think about WW1.

The two years of the *Great War MK* project have provided project partners, participants, volunteers and audiences with an enriching experience that has commemorated WW1 heritage in Milton Keynes. There are a number of lessons that AHA-MK and the project partners will take away from the project as areas for development, in particular about responding to the rich diversity of the Milton Keynes population, about using the widest possible range of marketing approaches, and about steering a large and complex project effectively and efficiently. And we have demonstrated that it is possible to deliver a project addressing WW1 themes that is both enjoyable and commemorative and that there is great benefit in arts and heritage organisations working together, sharing information and best practice to interpret WW1 heritage.



The Best Company tank, Festive Road in Station Square

Project Plan and Project Aims

Great War MK – From Conflict to Cosmopolis was developed as a heritage-led project involving learning and education, skills development, engaging experiences and interpretation of WW1 heritage. The project aimed to bring together imaginative explorations of the theme of WW1 from heritage, arts and community organisations in Milton Keynes, encouraging members of the public, schools and young people to engage with WW1 concerns and to immerse themselves in the history of 100 years ago. It was intended that seven of our member organisations would deliver this project.

The development of *Great War MK* was informed by feedback from consultations which indicated that heritage opportunities in Milton Keynes needed to be more creative, particularly in the ways that stories are told and participants are engaged. We sought to address this issue by bringing together heritage and arts organisations to learn from each other – sharing skills, knowledge and processes to demonstrate the value of collaboration across the sectors. This approach also intended to animate the research and engage a wide range of audiences that might not ordinarily engage with heritage.

Great War MK aimed to achieve the following outcomes for heritage, people and communities:

- Heritage will be better interpreted and explained
- People will have developed specific skills
- People will have learned about their special heritage and what part they play in it
- People will have had enjoyable experiences
- People will have volunteered time with mutual benefits
- More people and a wider range of people in Milton Keynes will have engaged with heritage.

Each element of the project aimed to deliver to three or more of the outcomes listed above through a phased approach. For most of the strands, the first phase involved research and interpretation through workshops and activities, engaging schools and communities in the stories and memories of WW1 and encouraging reflection and personal responses. The workshops were developed to build research skills, access and interpret existing oral and written history and develop creative skills that were informed by the research uncovered. The second stage of each strand was then to develop a heritage or creative output that could be shared with the people of Milton Keynes, via public performance, exhibitions, live tributes, film screenings etc. It was intended that exhibits and performances would be made available in several locations around Milton Keynes to ensure that a wide audience were able to engage with the project outputs.

Through these stages of research and interpretation, the project aimed to develop understanding of the topic, and to ensure that a large number of people in the historic towns and villages of Milton Keynes engage with the WW1 centenary. As the conurbation of Milton Keynes did not exist 100 years ago, we were keen to engage different communities in Milton Keynes in reflecting on the Great War and how their ancestors around the world would have been involved in the conflict. For the new town of Milton Keynes, this has been an invaluable opportunity to connect its rural and urban areas, as well as the historic and the modern in a shared understanding of our heritage.

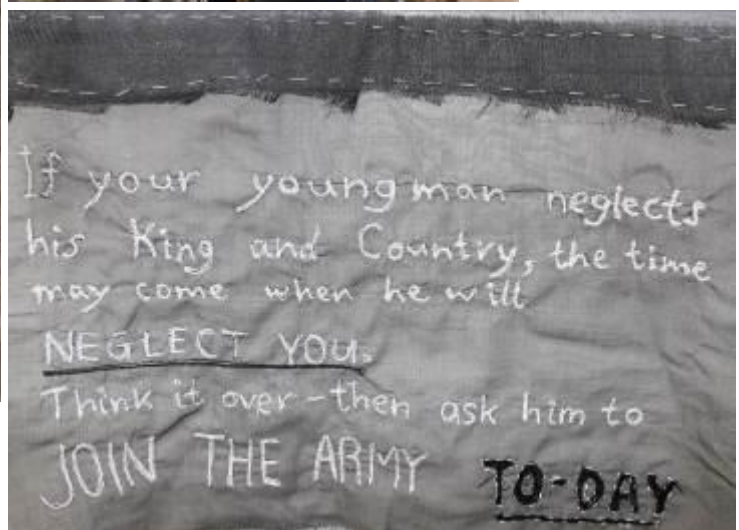
Although the subject matter of WW1 must be treated with respect, we aimed to ensure that people had an enjoyable, if poignant, experience when engaging with the outputs of the project. The heritage and arts activities that form part of the project would deliver additional creative and artistic benefits to those involved.

The project plan articulated that the main topics would be:

- Exploring WW1-era heritage films and historic cinemas of Milton Keynes
- Recording and interpreting new oral histories as well as revisiting archives held by Living Archive Milton Keynes
- Undertaking research and documentation of the histories and stories of participants' ancestors, initially through family history software and followed up through parish registers and archives
- Considering WW1 communication techniques and propaganda
- Researching local war memorials and publishing findings online and in print
- Presenting music, poetry and performance from WW1 research – both contemporary to WW1 and newly developed through interpretation of research
- Producing collaborative exhibitions and sharing findings – for local venues as well as for a dedicated website, bringing existing and new local material into one accessible portal
- Reaching new audiences – especially young people and ethnic minorities – to ensure inclusivity, to share learning and to ensure themes retain their relevance to people today.



*Simpson war memorial commemoration, Simpson History Group
Your Loving Brother Albert, Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company
Close-up of For the Fallen banner, Westbury Arts Centre*



Delivery

This project has been an inspirational experience for all concerned. As it developed, it grew in scope and resulted in a large array of events and experiences commemorating the First World War for the people of Milton Keynes. In the end, 13 partners were involved in delivering a wide range of activities with over 200 artists, 2,000 participants and audiences of nearly 10,000. During the two-years of the project, there were textile and art workshops, research trips and school assemblies, dance workshops and performances, exhibitions and open days, live theatre and concerts, film-making and film screening, poetry recitals and new music compositions, and a final showcase.

Great War MK has succeeded in re-interpreting the history of WW1 through heritage and arts processes to engage new audiences in the stories and realities of the conflict. Through various workshops, participants have experienced a rich immersion in particular areas of WW1 history, leading to new music and songs, artworks, digitised archives, memorial tributes, and more than 300 textile banners, as well as the celebration of these in exhibitions and performances.

These outputs – and the heritage they represent – have been shared with audiences across Milton Keynes, providing free opportunities for local people to engage with the WW1 centenary. In addition, the project has provided a large number of volunteer opportunities.

Although *Great War MK* has been careful to remain respectful of the topic of WW1, its individual elements have taken very different approaches. The project partners' varying interpretations of the realities of the war have been poignant and thought-provoking, as well as playful and amusing.

Our short film of the project can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/164890357>

Summary of Programme Strands

Musical Archive

For the last 40 years the Living Archive Band has been creating original music and lyrics inspired by stories and memories collected by Living Archive Milton Keynes (LAMK). Many of these songs relate to WW1.

This strand of the project focused on three aspects: the creation of new music inspired by local first-hand accounts, re-mastering of existing songs to add to digital stories, and a final public performance. LAMK worked with musical director Steve McDaniel and 20 young talented songwriters, musicians and film-makers to create new works. All were given access to LAMK's WW1 archive collection to inspire their work. The participants looked at diaries, letters and photographs and listened to first-hand oral history testimonies before creating moving new music and film pieces.

A performance was given at MK Gallery in May 2015 where a selection of newly-created digital stories, songs and poems was performed live to commemorate local people's experiences of WW1. This provided an opportunity for both the participants and the audience to celebrate and reflect on local people's lives and their poignant and powerful stories that are still relevant today. Steve McDaniel and the singer-songwriters and musicians produced a professional CD

Works on War to sell and the online bandcamp page:
<https://stevenmcdaniel.bandcamp.com/album/works-on-war>.

Music and film participants: 20
Audience numbers: 80
Film link: <https://vimeo.com/153710974>

Comments:

'As an A-level history student I'm familiar with the events of the First World War, but what you don't learn in school is how war impacts people as individuals. You learn the horrific statistics and facts in school, but the personal experiences of war victims are rarely addressed. After hearing individual people's stories being told, I feel even more strongly that war is wrong and nothing can be solved through it.' (Young singer-songwriter)

'Good concept, professionally executed and memorable.' (Audience Member at Great War Remembered music event)



Young singer-songwriters and musicians performing at Great War Remembered, Living Archive MK

The Best Company

Festive Road initially intended this strand of activity to engage old and new communities of Milton Keynes in researching and considering their family histories in respect of WW1. It would provide the starting point for development of an outdoor physical theatre show, a night-time performance centring around a large WW1 armoured tank structure. In the event, this strand was re-imagined in the process of creating the tank structure, which ended up being an extraordinary full-size (5m x 7.5m x 2.4m), cycle-powered, wooden replica of a Mark 1 tank. The focus of Festive Road's performance shifted, inspired by what they had learned about tank warfare, and they devised an original outdoor theatre show entitled 'The Best Company', based on what they had seen at Bovington's Tank Museum and on first-hand accounts of those who attempted to drive them into war.

'The Best Company' used physical theatre to present an amusing yet poignant perspective of a very real struggle as four friends take a WW1 tank into battle. The show has been performed in and around Milton Keynes and the ambition is for the tank to tour around the UK between 2014 and 2018.

Tank creators and actors: 12

Audience numbers: 453 – and at least 6,000 passive audience members when the *Great War MK* tank took part in the annual 'Walking with Giants' parade in central Milton Keynes

Film link: <https://vimeo.com/143145301>

Comment:

'It was great to work with Festive Road, a company at the top of their game – a hugely talented group of makers and engineers, hard-working but personable. The tank was a star, no-one had ever seen anything like it and it was definitely an experience to work on it. Devising a show on a moving, specialised set made the work powerful and engaging for both the performer and the audience. It was an experience and show to be proud of.' (The Best Company performer)



*The Best Company performances at MK Museum and Station Square
The Best Company rehearsal, Festive Road*



Collective Memory and the Invention of Truth

The concept for this strand of activity, delivered by Independent Cinema Milton Keynes (ICMK), was to create a programme of thought-provoking film events to unlock both the political and personal stories of war. ICMK took cinema into communities across Milton Keynes in a series of pop-up screenings focusing on revisiting our collective memories of WW1.

A further element of participatory activity was added to this strand during its development stages. Working with animator Rachel Wright, ICMK delivered a programme of workshops with schools and groups of young people to develop responses to WW1 through 'stop-time'

animation. Four animations, created by 47 young people, explored the impact of war and conflict, inspired by visits to Tate Modern's exhibition 'Time, Conflict and Photography'. They were screened at seven community events across Milton Keynes, in Wolverton, New Bradwell, Stony Stratford, Central Milton Keynes, Olney, Beanhill and Newport Pagnell.

ICMK's community screenings also captured the experience of cinema on the home front by using the advertisements for local cinema and Barber's Electric Picture Palace, placed in the Wolverton Express in 1915, as a guide to shape the events. The programmes consisted of a variety of short films, including the new animations, followed by screenings of contemporary feature films.

Animation participants: 47

Audience numbers: 520

Animation link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQIGJXNHak0>

Comments:

'We really like attending these film events because we learn all about the history of our new community. We moved here ten months ago. To bring history to life in these films is fascinating. We would like to keep seeing more. We also like the new films and hope to make some of our own one day.' (Film screening audience member)

'This is a very worthwhile enterprise and I welcome the chance to see these WW1-related films in remembrance of the awfulness of the war.' (Film screening audience member)

'The teacher was great, and I learnt how to use plasticine in stop-motion animation. I really enjoyed it.' (Animation participant)



Lego Great War MK logo still from animation, Independent Cinema MK

Frontline

This strand engaged 80 Key Stage 3 students in artist-led research trips, workshops, talks and a final exhibition.

From November 2014 to Summer 2015, MK Gallery artists Teresa Paiva and Alicja Rogalska worked with students from Milton Keynes Academy, The Hazeley Academy, Oakgrove School and Lord Grey School, to explore how artists have used the visual arts to depict and interpret military conflict. The students took part in practical workshops, explored the work produced by different artists and visited the Imperial War Museum.

The artists supported the students in the exploration and presentation of their ideas in a range of media including sculpture, painting, photography and film. This strand culminated in a month-long exhibition of the students' work in MK Gallery's Project Space from 5th to 28th June

2015 (see www.mkgallery.org/education/projectspace/frontline). Their responses to the theme produced a most thought-provoking exhibition.

The project also provided students with the opportunity to achieve their bronze level Arts Award.

Participants: 80
Audience numbers: 200
Film link: <https://vimeo.com/164333994>

Comments:

'This isn't only about completing our work with the MK Gallery, it's about working together as a group to create a piece of artwork showing the meaning of conflict through all our hard work and sweat to make what we have.' (Workshop participant)

'It was fun and a creative experience. I have met a lot of new people and it definitely improved my communication skills.' (Workshop participant)



Frontline workshops with Milton Keynes students, MK Gallery

For the Fallen

This strand was co-ordinated by Westbury Arts Centre and MÓTUS dance group, using their two creative disciplines to interpret the history and stories of WW1. Artists and volunteers organised workshops and worked with a wide range of community groups, education providers and individuals. Through textiles and dance, groups of participants explored stories, memories

and histories relating to different aspects of the Great War – channelling this information into a series of brilliant visual outcomes. Over 170 participants created banners, which were installed at the MK Rose (Milton Keynes' principal commemorative public space). They formed the backdrop for a large-scale dance performance which included 11 different groups at all levels of skill. 'For the Fallen', performed twice in the same day, was an extraordinary, vibrant and moving work. The banners were subsequently installed at Westbury Arts Centre, and several schools held exhibitions of their banners and performances of their dance pieces.

Participants: 360
Audience numbers: 1700
Film link: <https://vimeo.com/135230557>

Comments:

'The whole event was full of poignancy and pathos. The banners flapped rhythmically in the wind: the children's dance conducted by Helen Parlor was mesmerising; the young people dancing with the white feathers moved me to tears; the contribution of nurses, the experience of women, the bravery and frailty of the military action were all strongly realised.' (Francesca Skelton, High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, 'For the Fallen' attendee)

'I loved working with Vinny and learning about the war. I think that Vinny made our learning fun and exciting! Working with a REAL artist was amazing – like a dream come true since I hope to be an artist when I am older. She has made me think more about history and I enjoy that.' (School participant in textile workshop)

'I really enjoyed the rehearsal time. It created a good learning space and expanded my understanding of WW1.' (Dance workshop participant)



For the Fallen at MK Rose, Westbury Arts Centre



Centenary Remembrance

Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company produced and directed two well-loved community plays written by local playwrights – *Your Loving Brother Albert* and *Nellie*.

Your Loving Brother Albert, by Roy Nevitt, draws on the actual letters of Albert French, a young man from Wolverton who joined the army at sixteen and was killed in Belgium in 1916, one week before his seventeenth birthday.

Nellie, written by Roger Kitchen and Roy Nevitt, explores the lives of young women in Wolverton and New Bradwell just before the start of the war. It is based on the diaries of a young woman, Nellie Smith. We see the harshness of the lives of young working-class women at the time, but also the joy in their friendships and in their community endeavours.

Both plays use music and songs written by members of The Living Archive Band for the original performances. Together, they provided an informative, relevant, funny, sensitive and moving evening's entertainment. The actors were all from Milton Keynes and gave strong and emotive performances.

Actors and musicians: 20

Audience numbers: 248

Film link: <https://vimeo.com/153710973>

Comments:

'Very moving and powerful reminder of life before the war and the consequences of the war for local people. Social history at its best and beautiful, poignant music adding to the atmosphere and sense of impact the war had on so many lives. Well done.' (Audience member, *Nellie* and *Your Loving Brother Albert*)

'Very informative, excellent singing. Really made us think of what happened 100 years ago.' (Audience member, *Nellie* and *Your Loving Brother Albert*)





'An excellent community event. The two plays contrast each other beautifully – the life of the young woman from Wolverton who survived the war and the story of the young lad who did not! It is very important to keep telling the stories of one generation to those who come after them.' (Audience member, *Nellie and Your Loving Brother Albert*)

Nellie and Your Loving Brother Albert, Pepper's Ghost Theatre Co.

Deanshanger and the Great War

Rigorous research of their local history, engagement of local schoolchildren in artistic design and production, and extensive new exhibition material: these were the hallmarks of the Great War MK project for Deanshanger Village Heritage Society.

Volunteers researched 173 village soldiers who served in the Great War, 20 of whom died. They told their stories and the effects both on their families and on village life. Also under the spotlight was the internationally renowned local iron foundry, E & H Roberts Ltd. These ironworks, despite manpower shortages, enjoyed a period of prosperity during the war, producing thousands of their award-winning ploughs and agricultural implements for the home front.

Most impressively, the entire Deanshanger Primary School participated with screen-printing artwork and written composition in 'A Postcard from the Trenches' project.

Participants: 480
 Audience: 3270
 Film link: <https://vimeo.com/164528947>

Comments:

'I have always known and been aware of the Great War being one of the worst conflicts of modern times, but this has been made personal through uncovering my own family history and that of many others.' (Deanshanger Village Heritage Society member)

'It has created new links with other people in the village To me, personally, it helped uncover some family history that I had not previously been aware of.' (Deanshanger Village Heritage Society member)



Deanshanger Primary School WW1 Triptych, Deanshanger Village Heritage Society

WW1 Remembered

The Cowper and Newton Museum commemorated life in Olney during the Great War by means of a series of remembrance events throughout 2015.

They began in January with a commemoration of local hero Edgar Mobbs, a Rugby Union Footballer who played for, and captained, both Northampton RFC and England. When he attempted to enlist in 1914, he was refused a commission as being too old. He organised a local charity rugby match in 1915 to muster new recruits and raised his own 'sportsman's company' of 250 men. He was killed in action in 1917. The Museum worked with Olney Rugby Club to stage a re-enactment of the game and to mount an exhibition dedicated to the memory of the sixteen Olney players who were killed in WW1.

The Museum also delivered both an 'Old Time Music Hall' featuring music, comedy and sing-alongs, and a 'Songs and Poetry Night'. These both played to full houses, were very well received, and effectively brought the home front in Olney to life.

The final commemorative event for the Museum was the screening of an animated tale called 'Tommy in the Trench'. This tells the poignant story of the maker's grandfather and his experience of the war.

Participants: 55
Audience numbers: 515
Film link: <https://vimeo.com/160456026> &
<https://vimeo.com/165116020>

Comments:

'Wonderful to see the community come together, young and more mature, to recreate historical music hall' (Music Hall audience member)

'Had a fantastic night, really appreciated everyone's hard work in making such authentic acts. My children 13 and 8 really enjoyed the sing-a-long and old school humour. Thank you very much.' (Music Hall audience member)

'Great! Lovely afternoon out for the whole family, great atmosphere with an array of supporters for both sides.' (Rugby Match audience member)



Old School Music Hall, Cowper & Newton Museum

Local Great War MK Activity

Three local projects also formed part of our *Great War MK* project, but did not follow the same pattern as the strands above. They also delivered in-depth heritage interpretation in their localities, with less emphasis on workshops, but still providing strong heritage outcomes.

Constabulary Commemorations

The Buckinghamshire Constabulary Museum curator researched the 76 men from the County's Police Force, including those from the local towns and villages that now make up Milton Keynes, who fought in the Great War. Local newspapers and police and military records all uncovered information and stories that were used in a commemorative exhibition. This paid tribute to the police officers that joined up – in particular the 15 who died serving their country. It was accompanied by artefacts from the museum's collection, including the WW1 medals belonging to PC40 Thomas Leonard Johnson, and a bullet that wounded Thomas in the ankle so seriously he was discharged from the Army.

Local Commemorations – North Crawley

On Saturday, 13 September 2014, as part of that year's Heritage Open Days, North Crawley Historical Society arranged an exhibition to commemorate the anniversary of the start of WW1. Over 100 men from the village served; 25 did not return. It is hard to imagine the impact that 100 young men going to war had on a village the size of North Crawley. There were display boards for all the soldiers who served, with as much information on each as was available and, where possible, a photograph. Other WW1 memorabilia were also displayed. Around 150 people visited the exhibition on that day and a further 30 when it was displayed again on a smaller scale in January 2015. The society is in the process of turning the exhibition material into a book.

Local Commemorations – Simpson

In Summer 2014, both the granite war memorial outside St Thomas' Church, Simpson and the wooden Roll of Honour in the church porch were cleaned and re-lettered for the centenary of the start of the Great War.

The names of the eleven men from Simpson parish who died in the war are again legible and that has rekindled interest in their lives. So far, Guardsman William Eaton (Corporal of Horse), Arthur Rose (Distinguished Conduct Medal), Private Frederick Nicholls and Private Christopher Baker have each been commemorated on the centenary of their death. Flowers have been laid at the memorial and a short account of each man's life and death published. This practice will continue until 2019 with the centenary of the eleventh name on the memorial, Private George Bridge (Military Medal).

Film link: <https://vimeo.com/117361078>

Great War MK Finale

The *Great War MK* Finale was never anticipated to be such a large event as was eventually delivered in November 2015. We had planned for a final exhibition to showcase the achievements of the partners and participants and to enable greater numbers of Milton Keynes residents to experience the project outputs. However, the project partners were so engaged by the project and

so passionate about their strands and the collaborative ethos that we agreed to develop a larger Finale to bring all the events and partners back together. This would be a chance to celebrate success, showcase our achievements and engage further audience members in commemoration of WW1 in Milton Keynes.

We worked with a local production company, Full House, and The Venue MK (a professional-standard theatre based in a Milton Keynes school) to develop a showcase, entitled 'Great War MK Remembered'. The event provided a poignant and immersive evening that brought together a patchwork of creative responses to WW1 in an evening of entertainment, commemoration and reflection. It included film-screenings and animations, performances of inspiring original music, stirring drama, haunting poetry, and breath-taking choreography – all against the backdrop of the specially-constructed, full-size replica WW1 tank.



Finale event, Great War MK Remembered Finale

There were 200 audience members on the night and feedback from them and our partners has been exceptionally positive:

'I just wanted to say how much we enjoyed last night It was very professionally put together, very entertaining, and made us really think about the effect the war had on our local area. We pass war memorials every day, but the evening really brought home what they mean.'
(Great War MK Remembered attendee)

'The show was a true reflection of the excellent standard of each of the individual project partners' creative work. A remarkable feat and at times a poignant tribute to those that served in the Great War ...The Last Post said it all with hardly a dry eye in the house.'
(Project partner)

'Just to say what an excellent production the Great War Remembered was and how poignant. The spontaneous response to the finale was just magical and it took on a life of its own. Congratulations to all concerned.' (Great War MK Remembered attendee)

'Events like this help to bring history to life and increase my level of respect for those who lived through those difficult times. I am now more inclined to attend a local war-related event.' (Great War MK Remembered attendee)

Dear Fran
Thank you so much for inviting me to
'Great War MK Remembered'. It was a
wonder evening - of sadness and happiness
as presented in so many ways. How
wonderful to remember some of the Living
Archive plays, but also to have film
created today by young people. The whole
mix created a very powerful and stimulating
evening. Very Best wishes, Julia

(CEO of MK Community Foundation to Chair of AHA-MK)

Before the performance and during the interval, we used the theatre foyer to present further elements of the Great War MK project, including short films and a silent movie from 1916 with piano accompaniment, as well as the *Great War MK* exhibition.

Great War MK Exhibition

As originally planned, we created a *Great War MK* exhibition in partnership with Living Archive Milton Keynes, whose staff and volunteers programme the 'Discover MK' space in the Central Milton Keynes Library. The exhibition was installed there from 6 October to 5 November, and was then transferred to The Venue for the Finale event. This exhibition provides an overview of the activities that formed part of *Great War MK* and thanks to additional funding from Milton Keynes Community Foundation is currently touring various community spaces in Milton Keynes, including parish and town council offices, schools and other libraries.



Great War MK Exhibition

Project Management

The management of this project was challenging due to the large number of partners involved, all developing their own strands of activity, and contributing to the overall *Great War MK* programme. A good deal of time and effort was required to co-ordinate the work of all the partners and to ensure they had all the information they needed to enable them to play their full part in the project.

One of the first tasks we undertook was to create a resource pack for the project containing various documents required to plan and deliver the different elements. This included templates for:

- Record and deposit guidelines for artefacts donated or loaned by the public
- Personal release forms
- Safeguarding policies (including child protection)
- Risk assessments.

The resource pack was made available to all project partners via Dropbox and has since been shared with the wider AHA-MK membership via our website.

Another important action was the implementation of peer-to-peer learning sessions at the beginning of the project, to enable arts and heritage organisations to share knowledge relevant to delivery of the project. These meetings (there were 12 of them) continued on a regular basis, providing the partners with updates, mutual support and often highly productive sharing of ideas. Internal communications were generally good due to these opportunities for collaboration, discussion and problem solving, but when partners missed meetings, as inevitably happened sometimes, it was harder to keep up to date with their planning and delivery.

As the lead partner in the project, AHA-MK has been very impressed with the quality across the different project strands, and feedback about the project has been overwhelmingly positive.

Marketing

The project partners endeavoured to take a collaborative approach to marketing for *Great War MK* – creating a project logo and identity and developing a print, blog and social media presence across the project. This was reasonably successful, but it was very hard to ensure that publicity and promotion remained fresh and engaging throughout the life of the project and throughout all facets of the programme. We received good press coverage for many elements of the project from local papers, but we know that the readership of our local press is currently declining.

Great War MK events were also marketed through social media, via our project blog (www.greatwarmk.wordpress.com), Facebook, Twitter, and online listing sites (local and national, including the Imperial War Museum's Centenary website). All project partners also used their own websites, social media and networks to market events to the public.

Across the two-year project, we engaged a considerable number of people. However, we are aware that some events were under-attended despite the marketing strategies outlined above and despite the work done by all the partners to promote their own projects to their networks.

Evaluation

Collecting evaluation materials from audiences and participants for this project has been demanding. In order to simplify the process for all partners, we agreed and printed an A5 evaluation card for the project, for all partners to use at all public events. In this way we hoped to ensure that all partners collected the basic data needed to evaluate their events.

E-surveys of audiences were also used, as well as an e-survey issued via SurveyMonkey to partners at the end of the project, to gather feedback from those involved in delivering the different elements of *Great War MK*.

Our filmmaker, who attended workshops, rehearsals, and final events, recorded the whole project, providing a detailed overview. This material has been edited to provide films showcasing the different elements of the *Great War MK* project (available via www.vimeo.com/greatwarmk). The total film archive of the project will be passed to The Living Archive Milton Keynes to add to their collections.



Banner workshop and Nurse banner created for For the Fallen

Review

Over the two years of this project, the quality and range of different activities relating to WW1 has been very impressive. We aimed to make the project as accessible as possible, by providing different types of activity and varied ways of engaging with WW1 heritage. All project partners worked hard to deliver stimulating and engaging activities. We believe the project has succeeded in reaching out across Milton Keynes, both to new generations of participants and to new audiences. We are very grateful that the HLF grant has allowed us to do all this.

In terms of outputs, the project has delivered:

- Staging of two WW1 community plays
- New dance pieces inspired by stories of WW1 and communication techniques
- Film screenings across Milton Keynes
- Re-enactment of a 1915 rugby match
- A large number of hand-made banners inspired by WW1 stories
- A stunning large-scale dance performance set against the backdrop of the MK Rose, and a sea of hand-made commemorative banners
- Short films interpreting the letters and oral records of local soldiers and residents during WW1
- A body of new music and poetry drawing on the archive of material relating to WW1 and a CD called *Works on War*
- New art works inspired by conflict
- Local WW1 heritage research
- A cycle-powered, full-size replica Mark 1 tank and physical theatre show
- Animated films made by young people, addressing WW1 themes
- Digitised local archives and new recordings of oral histories
- Poetry and singing events including an Old Time Music Hall
- Research into local war memorials and local soldiers, and commemorative events based on the findings
- Exhibitions celebrating new work inspired by WW1
- A collaborative display telling the story of the project (now on tour in Milton Keynes)
- A series of professionally edited short films about the work and achievements of the project's partners
- An online blog.

The project has revealed new information about Milton Keynes to its residents and, through this process, has created new connections. For the residents that attended and/or participated in events, the project allowed them to make deeper connections with their locality. Through gaining a deeper understanding of their home area's input into WW1, they have experienced a stronger sense of pride in and affinity to heritage. Several of the project strands have created connections between younger and older participants, creating new inter-generational relationships, which are enriching for both young and old.

Great War MK set out to educate the people of Milton Keynes about the Borough's role in WW1, and to provide them with opportunities to see, hear and experience the stories of 100 years ago. Our evaluation shows that both participants and audiences of *Great War MK* have learned about WW1 and its impact on Milton Keynes, and that experiencing elements of this project has caused them to reflect on this momentous conflict. In addition, the project has led audiences to change their perceptions about their local heritage and Milton Keynes' place in history, with many audience members commenting that they 'never knew ...' This is an important achievement: it helps to dispel the pervasive myth that Milton Keynes has no heritage.

In addition to its role in educating audiences, the project's partners and participants reported that they gained new knowledge and skills from their involvement. Project partners said that they had learned much more about the impact of WW1 in Milton Keynes, and that they learned a great deal from the experience of delivering their project strands within a collaborative framework. They had shared information and best practice in various aspects of delivery and had benefitted from an open, sharing environment when developing and delivering projects. The participants also reported learning about WW1 in Milton Keynes. The young singer-songwriters and those involved in creating the banners also reported that they developed skills in these creative disciplines which enabled them to communicate WW1 stories more effectively. Participants said that they had learned both from the project leaders and from each other.

As this has been the largest WW1 project to take place in Milton Keynes to mark the centenary of the conflict, it is fair to say that, without Heritage Lottery funding, far fewer people would have learned about and engaged with Milton Keynes' WW1 heritage. All the activities delivered as part of *Great War MK* were developed specifically for this project: they would not have taken place otherwise.

In terms of legacy, this project will continue to provide access to the heritage that was explored through *Great War MK*, as well as providing a platform for further collaborative and centenary work. The archive film footage will be deposited with The Living Archive Milton Keynes, creating a record that can be used by future groups. The blog and film websites will continue to be available as a record of what has been produced. The animations and digital histories on film will be made available to schools and other education providers as teaching aids. In addition, the *Great War MK* exhibition is continuing to tour. The tank is expected to tour the UK during the remaining period of WW1 commemoration.

The processes of planning and delivering *Great War MK* have brought a large number of people together, strengthening the collaborative ethos and approach that AHA-MK advocates. The project has thus provided a platform for further cross-sector collaborative work in Milton Keynes, building on the relationships created, or in some cases deepened, through participation in this project. Various partners have already articulated a wish to develop elements of their *Great War MK* work further:

- The group of young singer-songwriters are seeking to develop their work further and to perform together again
- Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company are exploring how they can stage 'Days of Pride' (another of Roy Nevitt's plays) in 2018 to commemorate the end of WW1

- Westbury Arts Centre have asked the textile artist who led the banner workshops to work with them on further projects.

Audience and Reach

During this project, nearly 10,000 people of all ages have been engaged. These include 2,000 who participated directly in workshops, working with organisations and artists to interpret and explore WW1 heritage at first hand. Several of the project strands focused on work with young people at primary, secondary, college and university levels, ensuring that these age groups could get involved in activities appropriate to their age and abilities. Of our evaluation respondents, the highest percentage of the audience fell within the 66-75 year old segment (18.6%), closely followed by under-16s (18.1%). The least represented age group was over-85s (1.4%), followed by 26-35s (5.2%). WW1 as a topic clearly appeals to all ages.

The application to HLF for *Great War MK* outlined an aspiration to engage different cultures and communities in the project – to explore the stories of their antecedents and the role they might have played in WW1 100 years ago. 26% of the population of Milton Keynes do not fall into the ‘White British’ census category, and the arts and heritage sector is very aware that this multicultural make-up is not reflected in their day-to-day audiences. However, although various project partners articulated different approaches to engaging these cultures and communities, it became clear as the project developed that they did not have the resources required to develop the relationships required to do this successfully. *Great War MK* has engaged people of different backgrounds and cultures through both workshops and public events, but it was not as successful as had been hoped in engaging all segments of our population. Further research and mapping of existing networks and relationships – as well as development of these relationships – is required to create meaningful engagement with Milton Keynes residents of different backgrounds and cultures. AHA-MK intends to develop further projects to address this issue.

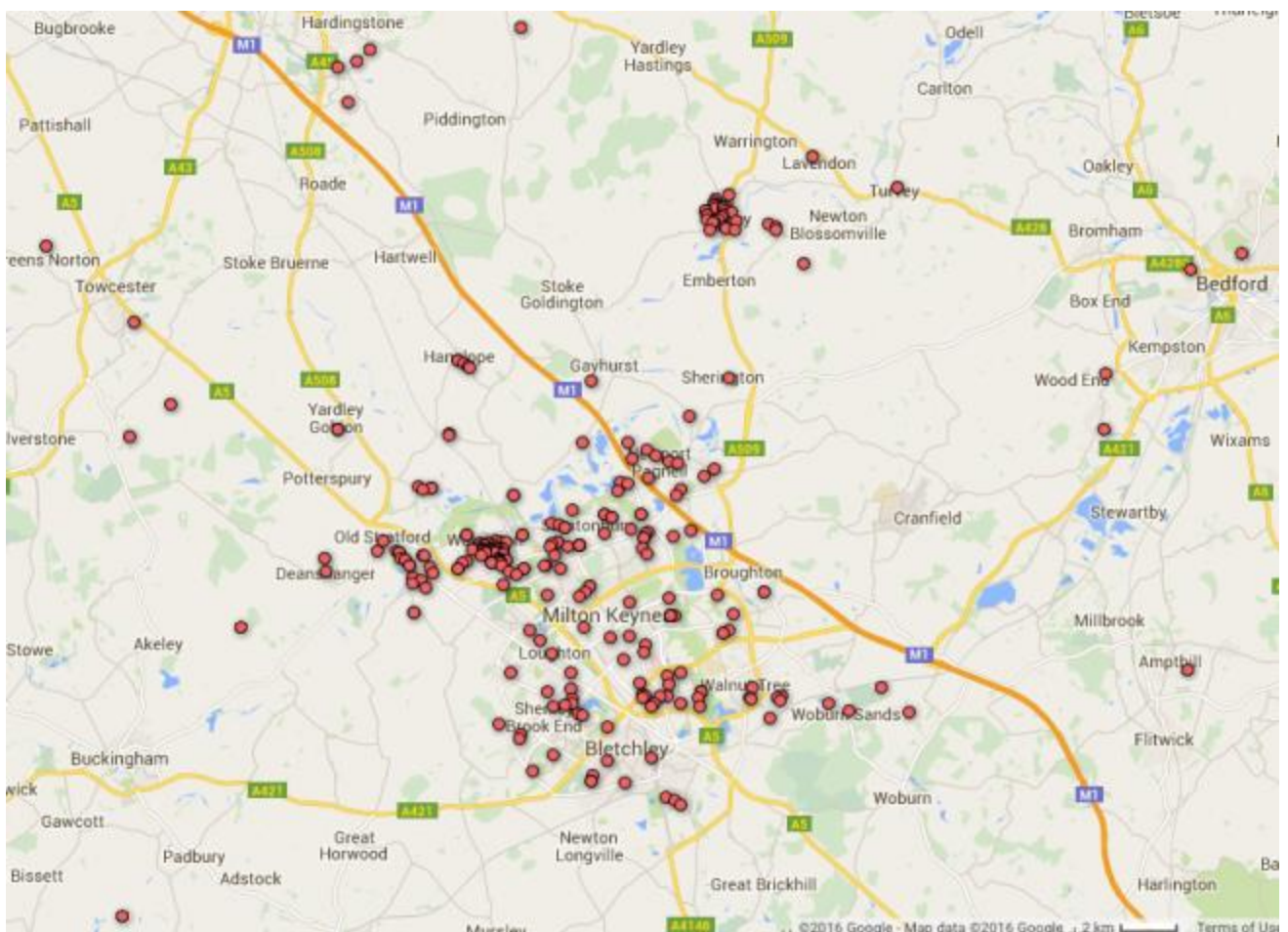
Across this project, we collected nearly 350 postcodes. The maps below show the distribution of *Great War MK* audiences, with a few people travelling from as far afield as Leicester, Ipswich and Bournemouth. Closer to home, it is apparent that one of the key aims of the project was achieved – to engage people from right across the Borough in the events and activities of *Great War MK*. The reach of the overall project marketing has been wide-ranging. However, it is clear that there are clusters in certain areas, where local marketing and word of mouth is likely to have been particularly effective, such as in Wolverton and Olney.



Graduate dancers at MK Rose, For the Fallen



Maps showing post codes of *Great War MK* audiences (Source: Google)



Participant and Audience Feedback

As stated above, audiences totalling nearly 10,000 have attended events as part of *Great War MK*, and 2,000 participants have taken part in workshops and performances. These audiences and participants have provided feedback through evaluation cards, e-surveys, e-mails and social media that shows they have interpreted heritage to create new work, they have learned more about the impact of WW1 in their area, they have learned new skills, and they have enjoyed their participation in the project.

Over the course of the project 380 evaluation cards were completed, a good sample rate across the total audience for the project. Of these respondents, 68% agreed that the event they had attended was 'very good' and 29% that it was 'good', showing that the events were perceived to be of a high quality. 91% of respondents agreed that the event they attended was 'good' or 'very good' at making them think about WW1. In response to the question about how much audience members learned about the Great War in Milton Keynes 12% said 'nothing', 44% 'a little', 33% 'a lot', and 11% 'a great deal'. These were encouraging responses.

The A5 evaluation cards had space for comments on the back: the word cloud below shows the most frequently used words.



It is good to see words such as ‘enjoyed’, ‘excellent’ and ‘fun’ included here, but more importantly for a commemorative project it is heartening to see words such as, ‘interesting’, ‘learnt’ and ‘war’ coming up in this analysis of the most used vocabulary. In addition, some of the words appearing less frequently provide insights into the activities in which people engaged (for example ‘animation’, ‘music’ and ‘poppies’) as well as their emotional reactions (for example ‘moving’, ‘memories’ and ‘atmosphere’).

The following selection of comments from the evaluation cards show that participants and audiences have both enjoyed their experience of *Great War MK*, and have learned new skills or gained knowledge about WW1:

'Lost both grandfathers in First War – I feel I know more of what they went through' ('War Horse' screening attendee)

'Through this project I learnt lots about the great war, from information at the MK archive and hearing of the real accounts of real local people made the great war more than just history.' (Workshop participant)

'I have really enjoyed this because I have learnt things about the world war and been able to do art as well.' (Workshop participant)

'This is a very worthwhile enterprise and I welcome the chance to see these WW1-related films in remembrance of the awfulness of the war.' ('Oh What a Lovely War' screening attendee)

'It was an enjoyable experience which brings the war to a new audience, which allows us all to understand more about the war.' (Dance workshop participant)

'I have thoroughly enjoyed this art project. My family, unlike myself, were all military. I am very proud of them all and their achievements. It gives me so much pleasure to help in my own very small way, by making banners for the forthcoming event to be held at Campbell Park. It is a privilege to do anything connected to the war – especially the Great War.' (Workshop participant)



Banner workshop for For the Fallen

The young singer-songwriters that took part in the music strand run by The Living Archive found that they had gained a great deal from their involvement and will continue to develop their own work:

'Improved on my songwriting – my use of words and language techniques have been enhanced. Due to how delicate and significant the Great War was, it was very important I used emotive words to convey the journey of the soldier involved. It also allowed me to identify the genre of music I would like to make as a singer-songwriter.'

'I was forced to write a) to a brief and b) within a very short space of time, both of which were a fantastic challenge. I also had the opportunity to think about songwriting differently because I was arranging my song for a full band/musical ensemble. The results were

surprising and exciting’.

‘I now have a very keen interest in the history of Milton Keynes This project has also made me pick up a new instrument. I’m learning how to play the piano at the moment.’

Some respondents have shown that they learned new things that led them to change their opinions:

‘I hadn’t recognised quite how much this area of the country was involved. It’s definitely going to make me look at some of our elderly residents differently.’ (‘Great War MK Remembered’ attendee)

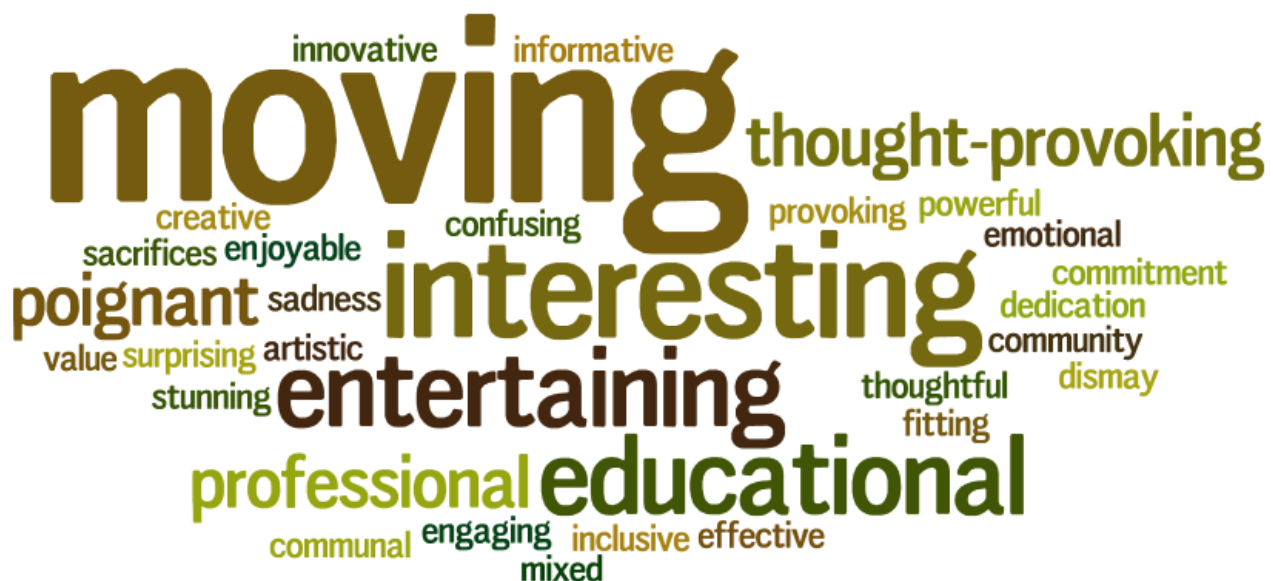
‘It has changed how I see war memorials now. I’ve started to notice them more.’ (‘Great War MK Remembered’ attendee)

‘I learned about how to stitch around corners and learned that Germans could be nice people, not just bad guys.’ (Workshop participant)

‘The project showed us so many parallels between the Great War and the wars we fight today, it helped to further strengthen my convictions surrounding pacifism and my anger that so many are still sent to death for nothing more than monetary gain.’ (Workshop participant)

Analysis of the responses to the audience e-survey after the ‘Great War MK Remembered’ finale event showed that 64% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ the event was of a high standard and the rest (36%) ‘agreed’. 71% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the event made them consider the impact of the Great War and 100% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that this event was a fitting commemoration of the Great War in Milton Keynes.

This survey asked respondents to provide three words that they felt described the ‘Great War MK Remembered’ event. The word cloud below presents their responses.



These frequently used words show that *Great War MK* succeeded in its aim to present WW1 material to audiences in an enjoyable, yet respectful way. The choice of 'moving' as the most frequently used word is a fitting response to the project and its objectives.

Delivery Partner Feedback

Feedback from the partners that delivered *Great War MK* demonstrates the level of engagement, research and fulfilment that they received from the project:

'An opportunity for like-minded people to share their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm and contribute to the broader cultural life of Milton Keynes.'

'I have always known and been aware of the Great War being one of the worst conflicts of modern times, but this has been made personal through uncovering my own family history and that of many others.'

'I have developed a greater affinity with the village that I moved into 30 years ago and met some interesting people with fascinating stories to tell both from now and the past'

'Groups come alive and create through knowledge Fantastic to take such an event in history and provide so many artists' responses in all different forms. Offers new and fresh ways to experience and capture the Great War and understand the historical importance and relevance of an event like this.'

'Rachel and I have both learnt a lot about war, have enjoyed our meaningful discussions with audiences and enjoyed working with children and parents.'

'For us to have engaged children with this difficult subject in a way they can relate to and connect with has been the most important aspect of the project.'

Project Management

One challenge that was experienced by all project partners was keeping the motivation going throughout the two-year project, especially as different partners had different delivery periods. For many partners, two years is a long time to be working on a project focusing on a single topic: there were times when they felt less engaged, especially as various organisational issues can arise over such a long timescale. However, the regular meetings of partners helped to keep everyone together and supporting each other throughout the period.

We are pleased to report that in spite of challenges along the way, this project has been delivered on time, and on budget.

Marketing

In the early planning stages, partners agreed to use joint marketing to publicise all the different elements of the project. A logo and a suite of marketing materials were created, providing templates for delivery partners to use and ensuring that the project had a cohesive identity. Digital media were also used to promote events, via the blog, social media and online listings. The local press and local radio were also engaged and some good coverage was achieved. Nevertheless, the partners found that maintaining the promotional profile over the two-year programme was hard work and very time-consuming and, although the project was publicised

through all available avenues, the evaluation found that some people still complained they had not heard about events.

Engagement via Twitter and Facebook was strong, particularly during summer 2015, when there was a large number of events.

AHA-MK reached out to a new audience via Facebook marketing for the first time. We developed a new, collaboratively administered Facebook page for the project, which now has 400 followers. During the busiest periods, posts were gaining 1000 impressions. However, this could have been more effective still if we had already had an active Facebook page, as it takes time to develop an audience for a new page.

Our Twitter followers increased significantly in number during the two years of the project (from around 500 to over 700) and the account connected with many new WW1-focused organisations and individuals. Project partners were collaborated by re-tweeting event tweets. When promoting the *Great War MK Remembered* finale event in October 2015, via the AHA-MK Twitter page, posts gained 10,700 impressions and there were 22,700 when promoting The Best Company and their tank. The Imperial War Museum's First World War Centenary Twitter account also re-tweeted *Great War MK* events picked up via their online listing. The Twitter campaign was supported by an enthusiastic volunteer, who was passionate about WW1 heritage and inspired by the various strands of the *Great War MK* project. His help greatly improved the social media promotion that we achieved.

The blog (www.greatwarmk.wordpress.com) was an important resource for promoting the project. It featured a page listing events, as well as ticket-booking services. It included multi-media content, and the blog entries provide a record of the life of the project. There were over 4,000 visits to the blog. However, it was at times difficult to gather information, images, etc. from the partners to populate the blog. In some cases, this was due to the type of project being delivered, in others it related to time or staffing constraints.

By marketing events as part of the wider *Great War MK* project – using a joint website, social media and print – we had hoped to ensure that people attended more than one event, so that, once they knew about the project, they would take part in other elements of it. However, analysis of the responses to the evaluation cards shows that, over the course of the project, 81% of respondents had attended only that particular event, and not other *Great War MK* events. Only 7% of respondents reported attending more than one other *Great War MK* event.

Evaluation

Due to stretched resources and the difficulty of securing volunteer support for collection of feedback, there were fewer evaluation cards completed than we had hoped. Some elements of the project found this process easier due to the type of event involved. It is always easier, for example, to get surveys completed as part of a workshop or participatory event than at a film-screening or concert. Nonetheless, the 380 evaluation cards that were completed represents a reasonably good sample size for the total audience. In addition, we received feedback via online surveys, e-mails and social media that has been overwhelmingly positive.

In line with current audience development practice, 350 postcodes were recorded. This has enabled us to map audiences and where they have travelled from and, if required in the future, to conduct deeper analysis of the types of people that have attended events.

The project film-maker has recorded almost every event that has taken place, beginning with interviews of the project partners. The raw film footage will be deposited with The Living Archive Milton Keynes to serve as a record of all that was explored and achieved during the project. In addition, the film-maker has edited the footage to provide a short film of each project strand, which can be found at www.vimeo.com/greatwarmk

Heritage-led Collaboration

Great War MK was designed to be a collaborative project in which organisations worked together and learned from each other in order to deliver the best possible project. To achieve this, project partners were brought together for monthly meetings. Initially, these were to share information and skills around particular topics across the sector divide (for example front-of-house and marshalling best practice, policies and procedures for deposits and collections). Most partners found these sessions very useful. A second phase of preparatory activity involved collaborating to develop a Resource Pack containing the essential paperwork for the project, including deposit forms, release forms, risk register, logo and branding guidance, etc. This has now been developed into a generic Resource Pack available via the AHA-MK website.

From this point on, partners worked together to develop the different strands of activity, supporting and reinforcing each other's projects. The regular meetings became a very useful sounding board and problem-solving forum for the partners, and a creative space for developing new activities and new approaches. It was hoped that this would lead to greater collaboration in delivery, for example by co-locating activities to build critical mass and make it easier to attract audiences. Although this did happen in a few cases, this ideal was not fully realised.

Although, due in part to the work of AHA-MK, organisations within the arts and heritage sector in Milton Keynes are used to working collaboratively, this project provided the opportunity for much closer working. All partners have commented positively about the experience, although some have suggested that the collaboration could have gone further – into delivery, for example. The finale event was outstandingly successful in bringing everyone together again at the end of the project and allowing all partners to see elements of the project they might have otherwise missed. Overall, the project provided an excellent opportunity to develop the collaborative ethos of our local sector by convening around the common theme of WW1 heritage.



Poppies collected by MK libraries for Great War MK

Training

In addition to the educational and experiential benefits discussed above, *Great War MK* has delivered training opportunities for partners, volunteers and participants. The project began with a series of peer-to-peer training sessions for project partners to share information and best practice. Feedback from the partners has shown that they felt this was a very positive beginning to the project, and that both arts and heritage partners learned from these sessions. They were extremely useful in creating a platform for continued sharing and problem solving between the partners. Although more formal training had been suggested as part of the project plan for *Great War MK*, it was found that, as the project developed, this was not required.

Project partners, staff within their organisations, and volunteers working on most project strands were exposed to significant on-the-job training and mentoring during the course of the project. They developed skills in:

- Digitisation and transcription through local history projects
- Design, up-cycling and fabrication of carnival creations (through building the Mark 1 tank)
- Project and event planning and delivery
- Large-scale event delivery (through the commemorative rugby match and 'For the Fallen')
- Arts organisations delivering heritage outputs and outcomes and vice versa
- Heritage research techniques and interpretation.

Great War MK workshop participants also gained skills in:

- Heritage research techniques and interpretation
- New forms of dance and choreography through 'For the Fallen'
- Song-writing techniques and skills
- Textiles techniques
- Acting and performance techniques
- Animation and filming skills.

Volunteers

Volunteers have been essential to the *Great War MK* project. Over two years the project recorded 2,729 volunteer hours, equating to £20,607 of support. Volunteers have provided much needed support for delivery of events through:

- Marshalling and logistical support, particularly at large events such as 'For the Fallen'
- Front of house roles for 'Nellie' and 'Your Loving Brother Albert', film screening events, and 'Great War MK Remembered'
- Online and digital elements in creating and implementing the website and social media strategies
- Development of displays and exhibitions
- Digitisation and transcription of records
- Stitching banners for 'For the Fallen'.

In addition to these support roles, some of the project strands have also been delivered by a volunteer cohort. In some cases funding was used to buy in specialist support, such as

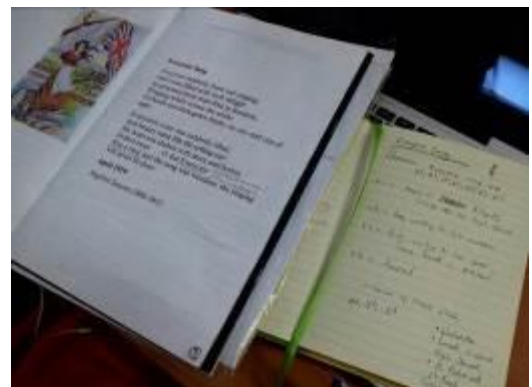
choreographers or theatrical directors, or to purchase materials, yet a good deal of the project planning, administration and the final performance was achieved by volunteers. For example, the project management for 'For the Fallen' was provided by the Chair of Trustees of the lead organisation in a voluntary capacity and all of the participants in the final event were performing for the love of dancing. And the performances of 'Nellie' and 'Your Loving Brother Albert' had a fully voluntary cast working with a paid director and back-stage crew. In other cases the sheer scale of the project overwhelmed the time and budget allocated and elements such as the Mark 1 replica tank were only completed thanks to voluntary time and effort. This dedication shown across the *Great War MK* project exemplifies the passion and enthusiasm that volunteers bring to projects. In addition, many volunteers have essential specialist skills. The wide range of roles that were delivered by volunteers and the number of hours logged to the project demonstrate how critical they have been to the success of *Great War MK*.

The *Great War MK* project plan expected that the lead organisation, AHA-MK, would recruit and train additional volunteers as required for the large-scale commemorative events. In practice, however, it was found that this additional support for volunteers was not required. Each partner organisation drew on its own network of volunteers to deliver its strand of activity, or self-recruited new volunteers where necessary. Several new volunteers were recruited through the workshops that organisations ran as part of the *Great War MK* project, showing how the audience 'ladder of engagement' can evolve naturally through a project like this.

Partner organisations were asked to comment on their experience of working with volunteers during this project:

'DVHS is an entirely voluntary organisation, so no paid staff worked on the project, but there were 19 volunteers that worked many recorded hours for the project and many more contributed or volunteered their time talking with us, telling their family stories and lending or showing us their precious possessions. Without any of them this project would not have happened and the village archive for this period is all the richer for it. Tasks included research, conducting interviews, transcribing documents, visiting archives, meeting and greeting, and building exhibitions.' (Deanshanger Village Heritage Society)

'Without volunteers there would have been no-one on the stage, no-one to supervise the performances and no photographic record of the stage show.' (Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company)



Source materials and artefacts for research, Living Archive MK and Simpson History Group

One volunteer commented:

'It's been fascinating unearthing the lives of the men that served and especially moving were the stories of where and how they died and the devastating effect the war had on families – in many cases for the rest of their lives.' (DVHS oral history recordings and research)

Lessons Learned

The two years of the *Great War MK* project have provided project partners, participants, audiences and volunteers with an enriching experience that has commemorated WW1 heritage in Milton Keynes. Over this period, the project partners have had great successes and overcome significant challenges. There are a number of lessons that AHA-MK and the project partners will take away from this project as well as some clear areas for development.

1. First World War – enjoyable and commemorative

Great War MK has proved that it is possible to deliver a project addressing WW1 themes that is both enjoyable and commemorative. Feedback from both participants and audiences demonstrates that the project has delivered a broad range of activities inspired by WW1 stories with respect and warmth, while also providing inspirational and enjoyable experiences for those participating in workshops and for audiences attending events. *Great War MK* set out to address this challenge by bringing arts interpretation techniques to bear on heritage research in all strands of the project, and it is heartening to see this has been successful.

2. Heritage-led Collaboration

Great War MK brought together 13 partner organisations (five of them arts organisations) to interpret WW1 heritage and stories through both arts and heritage techniques. These organisations have shared information and best practice (often sector-specific practice) that have informed the development of the project strands. The partners have worked together to develop activities and solve problems, providing both sectors with greater insights into each other's approaches and practices than when working in isolation.

Although the project partners involved in *Great War MK* are all members of AHA-MK, and therefore understand the collaborative approach that is advocated through other AHA-MK activities, this project has provided a unique opportunity for them all to work together. This has further developed the collaborative approach, creating a platform for further projects.

3. Diversity

The *Great War MK* application to HLF outlined an aspiration to engage different cultures and communities in this project – to explore the stories of their antecedents and the role they might have played in WW1 100 years ago. 26% of the Milton Keynes population are, in census terminology, 'Non White British' and the arts and heritage sector is very aware that this multicultural population is not reflected in their audiences. However, although various project partners articulated different approaches to engaging these cultures and communities, it became clear as the project developed that they did not have the resources required to develop the relationships required to do this successfully.

Further research and mapping of existing networks and relationships, as well as development of these relationships, is required for Milton Keynes' arts and heritage organisations to create meaningful engagement with Milton Keynes residents of different backgrounds and cultures.

4. Marketing

It was agreed that joint marketing would be used to publicise the different elements of *Great War MK* – a logo and suite of marketing materials were created, providing templates for delivery partners to use and ensuring that the project had a cohesive identity. Digital media were also used to promote events, via a blog, social media and online listings. The local press were engaged and some good coverage was achieved. However, the partners found that maintaining the promotional profile over a two-year programme was hard work and very time-consuming and, although the project was publicised through all available avenues, the evaluation found that some people still complained they had not heard about events.

It is hard to suggest how we can improve this picture, as it appears to be a pervasive issue for all events and cultural activities in Milton Keynes. Social and digital media are growing in popularity, especially amongst the younger generation and this is an avenue that will require more work in the future.

5. Project Size

This was the largest collaborative project that AHA-MK has delivered to date (and the first project funded by HLF). All 13 partner organisations were very impressed by the range and quality of the activities that were developed and with the overall success of the project. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the partners have worked well together. However, while AHA-MK is delighted to have successfully bid for the funding, taken the project on, and seen it through, it has to be admitted that *Great War MK* has absorbed a great deal of AHA-MK's operational time, at times to the detriment of other projects and core activities. The most time-consuming elements have been keeping all partners updated, working together and communicating with the lead organisation (in respect of event dates, blog updates, funder reporting, etc.), and managing the budget and finances.

In any future collaborative projects, it is likely to be beneficial to share the responsibility for project management (including financial management) between AHA-MK and one (perhaps even more than one) other lead partner.



Frontline workshop, MK Gallery