

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Culture, Libraries and Heritage Committee	27 May 2014
<b>Subject:</b> First World War commemorations	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	<b>For information</b>
<b>Summary</b>	
This report provides an overview of activities within the Culture, Heritage and Libraries department to commemorate the First World War	
<b>Recommendation</b>	
It is recommended that the report is received.	

## Main Report

### Background

1. This report outlines the commemorative programme planned by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries department in connection with the centenary of the First World War. The report focuses on activities planned (and in some cases already delivered) for 2014, although the commemorative period will extend to 2018 and some projects cover later years. The programme is regularly shared with the Remembrancer, Mansion House and the Public Relations Office to ensure that coordination takes place across the City.
2. In relation to national commemorations, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is the lead Government department for the commemorations and the Imperial War Museum is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of local, regional, national and international cultural and educational organisations. Activities will fall into three main categories: remembrance, youth and education. The role of women and the Commonwealth will also be key themes.
3. Beyond the centenary of the outbreak of the War in August, other key dates around which national activity will be focused are April 2015 (Gallipoli Campaign); May 2016 (Battle of Jutland) and July 2016 (Battle of the Somme); July 2017 (Battle of Passchendaele); and Armistice Day 1918.

### Current position

#### Barbican and Community Libraries

4. The annual Cityread across London in April 2014 focused on two books: Louisa Young's 'My dear I wanted to tell you' (for adults) and Michael Morpurgo's 'Private Peaceful' (for children). Both are set during World War 1. The programme comprised:
  - 2nd April. Cityread Launch at Barbican Library. Members of the public were invited to chat to staff about Cityread over a glass of wine, enter quizzes on WW1 poetry and film, borrow WW1 related books, and sign up for WW1 related events. There was a special display of fiction books published during WW1 on loan to the library from the collection of the late Edward Dudley.
  - 9th April. Talk by Rupert Colley 'World War 1: History in an Hour'.
  - 15th April. Play reading. 'Journey's End' by RC Sherriff
  - 29th April. Open Reading Group on Louisa Young's book which was attended by 16 people. 3 other Barbican Library reading groups also read this book during April.
  - 29<sup>th</sup> April. Some pupils from Year 10 at City of London Girls' School discussed 'My Dear I Wanted to Tell You' – 2 library staff joined the discussion
  - 30th April. 'The Great War Remembered: Poetry and Readings' presented by the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors.
  - 3rd, 10th, 16th and 22nd April 'The Day the Lamps Went Out: WW1 and the City of London' – a guided walk around the square mile, starting from Barbican Library and looking at memorials from the Great War and historical sites with WW1 connections and stories
  - Throughout the month Barbican Library customers were offered the opportunity to research family history and connections with the Great War in one-to-one guided sessions using the library's genealogy databases.
  - The Barbican Children's Library ran the following events:
    - 7th April. A theatrical performance of 'Private Peaceful', a one-man show by John Kirk
    - 8th April 4.30–5.30pm Open Reading Group for children aged 10–12 to discuss 'Private Peaceful'.
    - 12th April 11–12 noon A World War 1 craft session for children aged 5+
  
5. The Barbican Library will host an exhibition 5th November – 31st December 2014 in the Music Library with the Royal Fusiliers, probably focusing on diaries and letters.
  
6. As part of Cityread, book groups at Shoe Lane, Artizan Street and London Metropolitan Archives read the Louisa Young book.

### **Guildhall Art Gallery**

7. There will be a 'painting in focus' programme starting in July 2014 until at least December 2014 looking in detail at individual works in the Gallery's collections with a WW1 theme, beginning with 'Recruiting at the Guildhall' by Fred Roe.

8. Significant First World War related items from the LMA collections will be displayed in the new Heritage Gallery at times during the commemoration period.
9. The Gallery is working with the City of London Festival on a joint event for the 2014 Festival, possibly a performance of WW1 songs and/or a spoken word event inspired by Lord Wakefield's speech at the Guildhall recruitment.

### **Guildhall Library**

10. An exhibition entitled *From Beef Tea to Battleships: Personal Stories from the First World War* will run from 4 August – 12 November. This will focus on personal stories, including 'Boy', who served on the first British submarines during the war and wrote to his mother almost every week, and use iconic items such as medals, letters and other personal effects to bring those stories to life. Also on loan will be military bugles from the Horniman Museum.
11. An exhibition of contemporary war photography, entitled *The Remembrance Image Project*, will run concurrently with the above exhibition. On display will be images from photographer Simon Gregor, taken of sites associated with the conflict at the anniversary of when they saw action. An accompanying afternoon talk and photography workshop based on this project will also take place.
12. Working with an installation artist, there will be an installation of poppies in the exhibition space. Details are still to be confirmed, but it is envisaged that appeal poppies from the Royal British Legion will be used, with visitors able to take poppies from the installation in return for a donation to the Royal British Legion.
13. There will be a programme of accompanying afternoon and evening events. These include poetry readings, an exhibition launch, lectures (with speakers from organisations such as the British Postal Museum and Archive and the Bank of England) and a workshop.

### **Keats House**

14. Keats House is hosting two afternoon poetry events
  - *The Great War Remembered* on Saturday 10 May. This commemorated the centenary of the outbreak of the War and the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors read poetry and prose from those whose names are now so symbolic of the sacrifices made for what was supposed to be the war to end all wars.
  - *War Poetry from Home* on Saturday 9 August (3 – 4 pm). War has always had devastating repercussions for those who remain at home and those who look back on wars in later years. This event will feature some very powerful war

poetry written by poets not involved in combat and will also focus on women who have had to face the loss in war of loved ones throughout the centuries.

- 15.
16. The house is also planning a joint event with Poet in the City for the autumn of 2014.

### **London Metropolitan Archives**

17. LMA has a large amount of information on WW1 within its collections, including those of the former London County Council (LCC). The collections are particularly strong on local government and businesses and their collective responses to the War, although LMA also has material on families and individuals.
18. LMA has already produced three guides to WW1 sources, available online. Second editions were released earlier this year which included further research undertaken in 2013.
19. For 2014 LMA will run a programme called ***Emergency! 1914*** which will include an exhibition at LMA; activities and events at LMA; and the use of online and social media resources.
20. The exhibition ***Emergency! 2014*** will run from 19th May to November 2014. It will explore the civic response to the First World War, revealing immediate civilian reactions to the War and focusing on the LCC Special Emergency Committee which met first on 11th August 1914. The Committee received weekly reports on matters such as unemployment and distress across inner London, and morale generally in the capital in summer/autumn 1914. The large public recruitment meeting held by the City Corporation early in September 1914 at Guildhall and attended by government leaders will also be examined.
21. LMA has also secured a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant to provide a real-time Twitter feed for August-December 2014, a blog and online galleries as part of the ***Emergency! 1914*** programme. LMA will recruit volunteers from London higher and further education institutions to investigate the archives and provide content for the online and onsite displays. Training will be provided in document analysis, creative writing and digitisation processes.
22. LMA is planning to apply for funding from HLF to create an online WW1 map of London. This would be an access point for digitised content from a range of archives, including re-created audio material. Stories would be derived from content linked to a particular place, for example, somewhere which was bombed in the Zeppelin raids. London borough archive services are being invited to work with LMA as partners. Over half of the 32 boroughs have already expressed an interest in taking part along with the the RAF Museum at Hendon and the Peace Pledge Union.
23. LMA is planning an exhibition in 2015-16 on the air raids in London during the First World War. This would include the raids on the City of London in 1915. It also considering, for later on in the period of the centenary, a commemorative

project based on the LCC's Record of War Service publication, which details the approximately 10,000 LCC employees who served in the War, including those who were killed. The records of other London organisations, including businesses, would also be used.

24. Members may also like to know that the City has invited Professor Jeremy Black of the University of Exeter to give a lecture at Guildhall in July looking at the effect of the outbreak of the War on people in London.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

25. The proposals outlined in this report align with the City of London Corporate Plan 2013-17. The proposals support the strategic aim 'to provide valued services to London and the nation' as well as the key policy priority of 'increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation'.

### **Conclusion**

26. A very stimulating and educative programme of events and other projects has already been arranged which will support the City's commemoration of the War.

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