



Project Evaluation Report

Robin Clutterbuck, National Coordinator, February 2019

1.0 Outline of the project

The 'Away from the Western Front' project took place between January 2017 and January 2019. It was a national project being delivered by the charity 'Away from the Western Front'. The project explored the campaigns in other areas of the world such as the Balkan Front, including Gallipoli and Salonika, the campaigns in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, the Mesopotamian campaign, including Iran, the East African campaign and the Italian campaign. This report explores outcomes of the project; much more detail about the activities themselves can be found at <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/>.

1.1 Range of activities

The project encompassed fourteen discrete projects, including three national activities, ten regional ones and one international activity:

National activities:

- *Music Project*
- *Creative Writing Competition*
- *Conference*

Regional activities:

- *Castle Drogo to Salonika*
- *Horses in the War*
- *Salonika Stories*
- *From Islington to Egypt Palestine and Syria*
- *Holy Lands*
- *From Lancashire to Mesopotamia*
- *The First World War: the Iranian perspective*
- *Health: the Hidden Enemy*

- *Food away from the Western Front*
- *A family goes to war*

International activities:

- *The Turin Men*

In addition, the project offered a platform for individuals to present their research into family or local histories related to the war away from the Western Front. As the central element of the project, a website was developed and historians were invited to write or edit articles about selected campaigns. In all, therefore, the project set out to raise awareness of the lesser-known aspects of the First World War (FWW), bringing the stories to wider and non-specialist audiences.

1.2 Arts approach

A key feature of the 'Away from the Western Front' project was to provide opportunities for people to use the arts to interpret these other theatres of war in ways which were relevant to their own lives. Involving theatre groups, film makers, musicians and artists, the project has created a wealth of resources easily accessible to a wide range of people. Depicting events through theatre and art has not only helped those creating it to broaden their understanding of the campaigns but has presented the information in easily accessible format to reach others. All performances were recorded and are digitally available. The National Coordinator explains the rationale for the arts approach:

You can't tell people about history - they have to take it on and engage with it. Using the arts is a way of taking that material and turning it around so that it means something to you personally, you can express your feelings towards that material.

1.3 Digital aspects

As a national project comprising many themes and regions, a website was developed where projects could be presented to wider audiences. All activities were either undertaken in a digital format (e.g. animation, digital media montage) or recorded if events were live (e.g. audio, video, photography). In addition, digital social media (especially Twitter) was the main vehicle for publicising the activities, leading to raised awareness within FWW groups and attracting the interest of individual researchers, some of which led to new sub-projects.

1.4 Partnerships

The central role of the 'Away from the Western Front' charity and the National Coordinator was to set up working partnerships which would deliver the activities, and to offer support and guidance to achieve successful outcomes. Some of these were professional associations, such as the Salonika Campaign Society and The Great War in Africa Association. Others were local museums, heritage sites, schools, community groups and other charities. Engaging partners to lead the small projects was a challenge as a Trustee described:

Locating good partners that could deliver was essential and time consuming. Identifying partners that could cover the stories for each of the campaigns was a fair challenge.

1.5 Support received

The project received support from HLF during the application and development process, and the officer gave some guidance on how to develop the project to meet HLF aims and outcomes. Having completed a previous HLF funded project (the Gallipoli Centenary Education

Project, 2015-16), it was felt that there was considerable expertise and experience with which to take the project forward and the 'Away from the Western Front' charity was established for the purpose of applying for funding and managing the project. In addition to the HLF grant, small grants were received from the Centre for Hidden Histories and the British Institute for the Study of Iraq.

2.0 Executive summary

2.1 Evaluation objectives

The 'Away from the Western Front' Project set out to engage audiences with the history and experience of the wider aspects of the FWW, relating these to the legacy of the war and its perception in British society today. In line with HLF objectives, the project sought to enable people to learn about heritage, improve knowledge and understanding, develop new skills, change attitudes and offer opportunities for enjoyment, inspiration and creativity. It was decided that the arts approach mentioned above, coupled with historical research, would make it easier to achieve these objectives.

A further objective concerned organisational development, whereby partner institutions might improve management and partnership opportunities, and refine their strategies to enhance heritage interpretation.

2.2 Methodology

The 'Away from the Western Front' project comprised regional and national activities. The regional activities were delivered by staff or freelancers at the various partner organisations and evaluation was carried out by them using guidelines provided by the project. National activities were carried out by the National Coordinator.

For the most part, the evaluation was carried out using feedback forms, designed to be quick to complete so that a high return rate was more likely. The forms included a mix of quantitative and qualitative evaluation, with quantitative answers addressing prior- and post-activity knowledge and understanding. Qualitative questions addressed knowledge and understanding; skills; attitudes and values; and enjoyment, inspiration and creativity. They also sought to gauge progression by inviting comments on what consultees felt they had learned during the process. In addition, the feedback forms include a brief survey on demographics.

As well as the forms, some of the projects included video records of the events, during which participants were invited to express their views on the activity. These films are all on the 'Away from the Western Front' website, and links to them are in section 10.02 of this report.

Finally, the impact of the website itself was evaluated using Google Analytics.

2.3 Baseline evaluation

A version of the feedback form was produced to carry out baseline evaluation with participants at the start of the sub-projects. Prior knowledge of the FWW and the aspects away from the Western Front was assessed, along with prior experience of using archives and museums for historical research.

2.4 Quantitative evaluation

A total of 888 people participated in the project and 26850 found out about the FWW away from the Western Front through the project (not including media readers, listeners or viewers).

Website visitors increased during the course of the project, with 11375 unique users up to the end of January 2019.

2.5 Qualitative evaluation

As this was a relatively small project, the qualitative findings are perhaps more indicative of impact than the quantitative data. The main qualitative findings indicate:

Increased knowledge and understanding about the FWW away from the Western Front:

- Improved awareness of geographical aspects of the FWW.
- Improved awareness of medical and mental health issues of the FWW.
- Increased awareness of differences and similarities between life now and a century ago.
- Consideration of the legacy of the FWW away from the Western Front, such as political and colonial outcomes which survive to this day.
- An understanding of the FWW from the perspective of accounts of individual soldiers, nurses or families.
- Improved knowledge about local history.
- Experience of working with historical source material such as objects, documents and historic sites.
- An improved awareness of the role played by animals in the campaigns away from the Western Front.
- An improved awareness of different national, cultural and international perspectives on the events of the FWW.
- Experience in techniques used to present history to wider audiences.
- Experience of managing heritage events.

A range of skills were improved as a result of the project

- 'Soft' skills such as communication, presentation and teamwork.
- Historical research skills.
- Drama skills.
- Art and craft skills.

People's attitudes were changed as a result of the project:

- Positive attitudes towards young people.
- Changed attitudes to war and peace.
- Changed attitudes towards heritage sites.

Participants enjoyed and were inspired by the project:

- Participants worked creatively to understand and present heritage stories.
- Participants were inspired to develop their own ideas and research.
- There were opportunities for reflection.
- People enjoyed many of the activities on offer.
- Some of the activities had therapeutic benefits.

2.6 Review

The project was more about people than heritage, so the changes recorded in the evaluation concerned people's attitudes rather than buildings or collections. The activities helped people to relate the heritage to their own lives by unlocking emotional responses through the creative activities developed through the project.

People enjoyed new experiences through the project. Beyond the central activity of researching the FWW away from the Western Front, volunteers and staff alike were inspired by the way the research was interpreted in creative and engaging ways, especially by young people. The young people themselves gained a great deal from the activities, developing new skills and confidence which encouraged some of them to think about their future careers. With the wide range of different countries and nationalities studied in the project, there were opportunities for people to view the FWW from different perspectives.

Across the country and abroad, people in communities were able to link the global stories of the FWW away from the Western Front to their local history, discovering how local people contributed to the wider story.

The most successful elements of the project included:

- The model of using creative approaches to engage people with heritage, and the development of new skills in the process;
- The effective use of new technology, both to provide a comprehensive online focus and to promote the activities through social media;
- The effective use of delegated partnerships to deliver an impressive number of regional projects with a relatively limited budget.

More challenging elements included:

- Difficulties in engaging audiences, including secondary schools where curriculum pressures limited the time available for extra-curricular activities, and targeting desirable yet hard-to-reach audiences which brought with them inherent barriers to participation;
- The flipside of partnership working, whereby partner organisations found themselves unable to deliver activities due to changing circumstances, or where their capacity to deliver had been overestimated;
- The relatively low take-up of national activities, probably due in part to competition from other FWW projects.

Overall, the 'Away from the Western Front' project provided a strong national focus for a little-known aspect of the FWW, engaging audiences across a wide area and achieving some inspiring outcomes.

3.0 What we wanted to happen

In the original funding application, the following aims were identified:

Heritage will be better interpreted and explained

- *As a result of our project, participants will have a better understanding of the First World War away from the Western Front and its impact on world history in the 20th century.*

Heritage will be identified / recorded

- *As a result of our project, more material will become available for people exploring FWW heritage.*

People will have developed skills

- *As a result of our project, people will have developed a range of skills linked to heritage learning and communication.*

People will have learnt about heritage

- *As a result of our project, people from a range of different audiences will have learnt about the heritage of the First World War away from the Western Front, through approaches designed to suit individual and audience learning styles.*

People will have changed their attitudes

- *This is a key aim of the project. As result of our project, through knowledge and empathy, people will have changed their attitudes towards war, international politics and religion.*

People will have had an enjoyable and inspiring experience

- *As a result of our project, people will have enjoyed learning about the First World War away from the Western Front and engaging with the heritage on a personal and emotional level.*

People will have volunteered time

More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

4.0 What actually happened

This section looks at how the project was managed in order to achieve the objectives listed in 3.0, including the delivery of regional and national activities and the wider impact of the project on the heritage sector as a whole, in the context of the First World War Centenary. Subsequent sections (5.0-7.0) explore the results of evaluation with individual participants.

4.01 Project management

Management tree

The project drew from the experience of running the Gallipoli Centenary Education Project (2014-16), in which a voluntary board oversaw the work of a National Coordinator employed through the grant. In 'Away from the Western Front', this 'board' consisted of the voluntary director of the charity, which had been set up for the purpose of managing the grant. This meant that the management 'tree' comprised this director (backed by her other trustees), then the National Coordinator, who managed the regional projects. Within these projects, staff and / or volunteers managed further volunteer researchers, freelancers, etc.

Partner organisations

Partners were fundamental to the running of the project, as they took responsibility for research, development and delivery of each sub-project. During the course of the project two of the original partners (the University of Chichester and the Iranian Association) dropped out but these were replaced by four new projects during the second year of 'Away from the Western Front', following a request to the HLF to amend the original Agreed Purposes. The original partners had dropped out because it turned out that they did not have the management capacity to deliver the projects as intended. Learning from this, a considerable amount of negotiation took place with the replacement projects before they were given the go-ahead. Value was added as a result.

Freelancers

The chosen model for regional activities used freelancer arts workers contracted by the partner organisations (or directly by central staff where partners lacked management capacity) to deliver activities and workshops with target audiences. In addition, the 'Away from the Western Front' project engaged freelance film-makers to record some of the activities, leading to a high quality output. Where there were issues around delegation the National Coordinator took a more active part in the management of freelancers.

Additional activities

Besides the main grant-funded outputs in the 'Away from the Western Front' project, there were also research-based activities which added value to the project as a whole but at little or no further cost. These included research carried out into individuals involved in the FWW away from the Western Front and articles written for the website about campaigns and wider issues to do with the history. In addition, the project connected with other FWW projects to achieve a wider impact (see 4.04 below).

Online presence

This was a broad project, with input from people all over the UK as well as other countries. For this reason it was decided that the website would be the central focus for dissemination of the outputs for the project. Thus all participants were required to provide a digital version of their activities, either as an integral part of them (e.g. the production of animation, visual art or graphics) or as a digital record of live activities such as drama or music events, or physical outputs such as wall hangings or banners.

It was also agreed that the main vehicle for promotion of the 'Away from the Western Front' project would be social media, especially Twitter, with a feed on the website as well as through the Twitter platform itself. Besides promoting the project, this resulted in people

coming forward with new material and in one case developing a completely new, international sub-project.

4.02 Links to other projects

During the course of the project it was possible to add value by linking up with other FWW projects. Some of these were taking place in partner organisations, allowing them to make use of staff and funds already in place and thus add value to both projects. In other cases the project linked up with separate FWW activities, thereby achieving a wider impact.

4.03 Partner organisations

Organisations had their own reasons for wishing to take part in the 'Away from the Western Front' project, seeing it as an opportunity to develop new audiences, build on prior or concurrent activities or offer additional work to staff or freelancers initially engaged to deliver other projects.

Islington Borough Council

As part of the Council's FWW Centenary work, the museum had been researching the history of the local regiment, the Finsbury Rifles, and the 'Away from the Western Front' project enabled it to develop a fully-accessible and digitised collection about the regiment. Besides being able to draw on this research for the project, the Borough Council recognised that it would enhance its strategic objective to engage local communities – especially hard-to-reach audiences – with the heritage of the locality.

Lancashire County Council

LCC runs a heritage learning team, working with schools to bring them into contact with museum collections. The team had recently delivered a project on the Indian Army, and saw the 'Away from the Western Front' project as a way to build on this. Lancashire regiments were involved in the FWW in Mesopotamia, serving under the command of the Indian Army, and many Lancashire towns now have high percentages of ethnic Indians and Pakistanis so the project offered opportunities to give schools and communities 'ownership' of this common heritage. The project officer had worked on the Indian Army project so was well placed to continue the work with 'Away from the Western Front'.

Newton Abbot Museum

The 'Family Goes to War' project came about because the local museum had been collecting material on local soldiers, while also embarking on a major HLF-funded redevelopment. The 'Away from the Western Front' project made use of the local research while also developing outreach activities and community links relevant to the new development.

North Devon

Like Newton Abbot Museum, the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon was embarking on a major redevelopment, and this project served to initiate outreach into the community during the period of closure and to forge links with other organisations which they wished to work with in the coming years. One of these, Beaford Arts, holds an important rural history archive, but the two organisations had had little to do with each other before this project and a strong working relationship was formed as a result.

Castle Drogo

A major FWW Centenary project, 'Devon Remembers', was running at the same time as 'Away from the Western Front', bringing local histories into Devon communities. Castle Drogo was involved with this project and the research carried out for a local community event coincided with the research into a local soldier who served in Salonika. Furthermore, Castle Drogo is itself undergoing major restoration and the HLF-funded project staff were available to work with 'Away from the Western Front'.

The Great War in Africa Association

A key theatre for the 'Away from the Western Front' project was Africa and the GWAA was an obvious partner. In discussion at the start of our project, it was decided to share research and expertise to focus on an aspect of many of the campaigns away from the Western Front – health. The result was of mutual benefit, with the GWAA's research into medical reports in East Africa tying in perfectly with the objectives of 'Away from the Western Front'.

Holst Birthplace Museum

This museum was keen to work with the project as they were involved in research into Gustav Holst's time in Salonika, for a new exhibition at the museum. The resulting 'Food Away from the Western Front' project not only added value to their work but also enabled them to give additional work to their freelance education officer, building activities, resources and links in the community.

Alabaré

The project worked with this charity which supports military veterans. Although Alabaré's charitable aims were not linked to the FWW, the 'Away from the Western Front' project offered useful ways for homeless veterans to engage with society in a rewarding and meaningful way, as part of their re-integration. Although not without its problems, this sub-project achieved some excellent results, meeting and enhancing the outcomes for both parties.

The Salonika Campaign Society

This was a particularly strong partnership, contributing to several of our sub-projects by sharing research, engaging expert speakers and even allowing the project to make use of film footage taken during battlefield trips. In return, the SCS received publicity and support for their own activities, such as social media and web development.

Other projects

During the course of the project, 'Away from the Western Front' liaised with several other projects – mostly HLF-funded – which had similar objectives. These included 'Far from the Western Front' (South Asian soldiers), 'Diversity House' (raising awareness of Africa's part in the FWW), and the 'Great Arab Revolt Project' (archaeological research in Jordan) as well as local history projects in towns and cities around the UK. In addition, the British Institute for the Study of Iraq contributed advice and a small grant to the project in order to enhance the activities connected with the Mesopotamia campaign.

4.04 Wider FWW projects

During the FWW Centenary many projects were taking place and it was possible to work with them for mutual benefit.

OpREFLECT

The British Army's initiative to learn from the experience of the FWW led to useful links with serving soldiers. Two officers contributed substantially to 'Away from the Western Front', by speaking at events and visiting projects in London and Preston to support participants in their research. One officer noted: *I am grateful that, through Away From The Western Front, I was asked to give my talk at Barnstaple Museum...it was good to have a mixed and engaging audience.*

'There but not there'

Set up to raise funds for army charities, this project distributed 'Tommies' and 'silhouettes' to represent missing soldiers at FWW commemorative events. 'Away from the Western Front' was successful in applying for six silhouettes which were used in two events in October 2018 and have been retained by the charity for use at future events. In addition the National Coordinator was invited to record a podcast about the FWW away from the Western Front which the charity promoted on its website.

IWM Centenary Partnership

Like many other FWW centenary projects, 'Away from the Western Front' was able to make use of the IWM partnership for publicity, support and networking.

World War One Engagement Centres

The AHRC-funded centres provided support to 'Away from the Western Front', inviting project representatives to speak at events and offering publicity and advice from time to time. One of the centres, the Centre for Hidden Histories, also contributed a small grant to support project activities.

Big Ideas

This organisation ran several national projects during the FWW centenary and 'Away from the Western Front' developed a link with one of them – 'The Unremembered' – to explore the history of the Labour Corps. Although this did not lead to a formal project it offered a focus for some research carried out as part of the sub-project in North Devon.

Never Such Innocence

This charity had compatible aims to the 'Away from the Western Front' charity, interpreting the FWW through the arts, and discussions took place to explore links between creative writing competitions running concurrently. In the event the link was not formalised but 'Away from the Western Front' was able to build on the experience to enhance its own projects.

5.00 Baseline evaluation

With a relatively small number of participants the baseline evaluation offered a snapshot of prior knowledge and expectations. It was carried out using the suggested questionnaire, which included the following questions:

- *I have a good knowledge of the First World War generally*
- *I have a good knowledge of the War away from the Western Front*
- *I have a good knowledge of local / community history*

- *I have a good knowledge of the historical background of current affairs*
- *I have experience of general historical research*
- *I have used online archives for research*
- *I have visited museums, libraries and archives for research*

The findings were not a great surprise. Participants attending specialist events such as the launch and conference had better prior knowledge about the FWW away from the Western Front than those attending more community-based events. At the launch 50% felt they had a good knowledge of the FWW away from the Western Front; at the conference 48% felt the same; for the 'Horses in the War' baseline research the figure was 36% and for singers recording the music demo it was 33%. As noted in 6.02 below, in response to the statement *After today my knowledge and understanding has improved* resulted in an 80% positive response.

In addition participants were invited to comment on their expectations, for example:

- *It sounded interesting but probably beyond my stitching capabilities.*
- *As I know very little about the war away from the Western Front I expect that, through research, I will become much more informed. I am looking forward to learning more about this subject, and passing it on to other interested people.*

One project used 'mind maps' to assess progression: see Appendix 1. Although relatively simple, it does demonstrate progression in a graphic form and demonstrates a useful way for participants to define and recognise what they have gained from an activity in terms of knowledge, understanding and changes in opinion or attitude.

6.00 Quantitative evaluation

6.01 Quantitative evaluation findings

The following table shows the numbers of people involved in the 'Away from the Western Front' Project and the follow-on impact through people attending local talks and events.

Organisation / event	Participants	Public	Media ¹
National launch event	35	n/a	-
National conference	80	n/a	-
National Music Project	53 ²	870 ³	-
National Creative Writing Project	82 ⁴	0 ⁵	-

¹ Dissemination activity carried out by/for partner organisations, including print and online media platforms. Excludes general AFTWF Twitter activity. In most cases the partner organisations were not able to separate out the AFTWF project from their central PR activity.

² Choir and band performances and recordings.

³ Audiences at events on 16.12.17, 27.10.18 and 10.11.18.

⁴ 80 entries (24 in the 11-18 category, 56 in the over 18 category); 2 volunteers .

Food Away from the Western Front	12	65	637 ⁶
The Turin Men	41 ⁷	75 ⁸	1,720,000 ⁹
A Family Goes to War	45 ¹⁰	1400 ¹¹	-
Health- the Hidden Enemy	16 ¹²	200 ¹³	-
Horses in the War	20	820 ¹⁴	
Castle Drogo to Salonika	66	1100 ¹⁵	-
Salonika Stories	17 ¹⁶	c.13000 ¹⁷	-
From Islington to Egypt, Palestine & Syria	285 ¹⁸	2370 ¹⁹	7450 ²⁰
Holy Lands	54	6870 ²¹	-
From Lancashire to Mesopotamia	82	620 ²²	-
The FWW – an Iranian Perspective	10	60	-
Totals	898	27450	n/a

Note. The wide variation in the number of people represented in the ‘public’ column above is due to the kind of partner organisation. Schools were able to present projects at assemblies,

⁵ Entries presented at the AFTWF conference, so figures not counted twice. Other dissemination was via AFTWF website, Twitter and email.

⁶ Social media reach and posts by museum.

⁷ 30 students, teachers and other participants in Italy; 11 researchers in UK and other countries.

⁸ Attending events in Italy and the UK.

⁹ Media reach in UK (Northern Echo – 220,000) and Italian local, regional and national papers.

¹⁰ 25 students, 10 school staff, 5 local museum staff / volunteers, 5 external voluntary researchers

¹¹ 200 at drama production, 1200 students attended assemblies where the project was presented.

¹² 11 volunteer researchers at GWAA; 5 in connection with the UK military.

¹³ GWAA online community.

¹⁴ Audiences at 5 concerts where the banner was displayed before the end of the AFTWF project.

¹⁵ Includes performances at Okehampton College (c.80) and Castle Drogo (28) and people passing through the exhibition as part of their visit to Castle Drogo (c. 1000).

¹⁶ Military veterans, artist/facilitator, volunteers (National Trust, Salonika Campaign Society), IWM staff.

¹⁷ In addition to 15 attending the launch, Sandham’s 2018 visitor numbers were c. 13000, almost all of whom passed through the visitor centre, where the film and exhibition were on show.

¹⁸ 43 via the animation project, 242 attending family events.

¹⁹ Exhibition visitor numbers 14.11.17-31.1.18.

²⁰ Blog views.

²¹ Includes museum exhibition visitors, private view attendees and attendees at community film screening.

²² 20 attending launch event; estimated 600 attending school assemblies and parent events.

and museums were able to count numbers attending exhibitions which included project displays.

6.02 Quantitative elements of questionnaires

Participants attending events were asked to complete an evaluation form to assess the success of the event in terms of new knowledge, networking and event administration, as well as more qualitative comments outlines in section 7. Five project events were evaluated in this way (the project launch, the choir demo recording, the launch of the Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition, the national conference and the 'Dyrons Boys' production), resulting in 82 forms being returned – a 52% return rate. The form offered 6 statements, and participants were invited to respond by selecting 'definitely agree', 'mostly agree', 'mostly disagree' or 'definitely disagree'. The statements, and percentage response rates, are shown below, with 100% being the highest possible positive response and 0% the lowest. Thus 50% would be a neutral response.

1. *I have a good knowledge of the First World War generally*

Result: 54%. Events attracted a mix of people with varying levels of knowledge about the FWW so this result is not entirely conclusive. For example, the national conference and project launch were attended by people with higher levels of knowledge while the choir and Sandham events were attended by fewer specialists.

2. *I have a good knowledge of the War away from the Western Front*

Result: 45%. Not surprisingly this result was lower, as more people across the board felt that their knowledge of the FWW away from the Western Front was poor. As with statement 1, the highest scores came from the project launch and national conference.

3. *The event has enabled me to meet new people in this field*

Result: 70%. Not all the events were networking events, so the two launch events achieved the highest percentages, while the more self-contained school and music events were lower.

4. *The event has helped me with my own project(s)*

Result: 54%. The lowest result came from the project launch (42%), possibly because it was at the start of the 'Away from the Western Front' project and was attended by people largely connected with this.

5. *The venue was appropriate for this event*

Result: 82%. Generally very positive.

6. *After today my knowledge and understanding has improved*

Result: 80%. The central learning objective for all the events was to improve knowledge and understanding about the FWW away from the Western Front so this high percentage indicates a high success rate overall.

6.03 Demographics

Demographic surveys were carried out in six of the events and projects. A total of 82 forms were completed, with the following results, by percentage:

Age

Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	Over 70
13	4	4	13	16	26	24

The 'Away from the Western Front' project appealed to older audiences. The 'Under 20' figures were all linked to the young people's animation project in Islington. The national conference and the 'Horses in the War' project accounted for 49% of the over 60s.

Gender

More females (61%) than males (39%) took part overall. The 'Horses in the War' quilting project was 100% female. All but one of the 'Salonika Stories' project participants were male.

Ethnicity

Asian (south)	Asian (east)	Black	White	Mixed race
0	1	2	91	6

In all but one project assessed, the overwhelming majority was white. In Islington, the young people's animation project accounted for all the black and mixed race percentages above. The audiences at this and the linked family animation workshops in Islington (which were not assessed in the same way), demonstrated a similar ethnic mix.

Disability

Only 9% of respondents identified themselves as disabled. However, sub-project officers carrying out evaluation offered a more nuanced picture, with some participants described as having complex health – and especially mental health – issues. A particular example was the 'Salonika Stories' project involving homeless military veterans, many of whom struggled with severe mental health issues, some of these arising from their past military experience. This made this project a highly significant one for the wider 'Away from the Western Front' project, which explored the experience of soldiers serving far from home in very challenging conditions.

Comments

The demographic data represents a snapshot of the project as a whole, representing only 10% of the participants and less than 1% of the 'public' attending events (see 6.01). It does demonstrate the point that the 'Away from the Western Front' project could not be said to have broken away from more elderly, white audiences traditionally associated with 'heritage' activities. Nevertheless the sub-projects aimed to engage new audiences and succeeded in this to an extent, as outlined in sections 8.02 and 8.03 below.

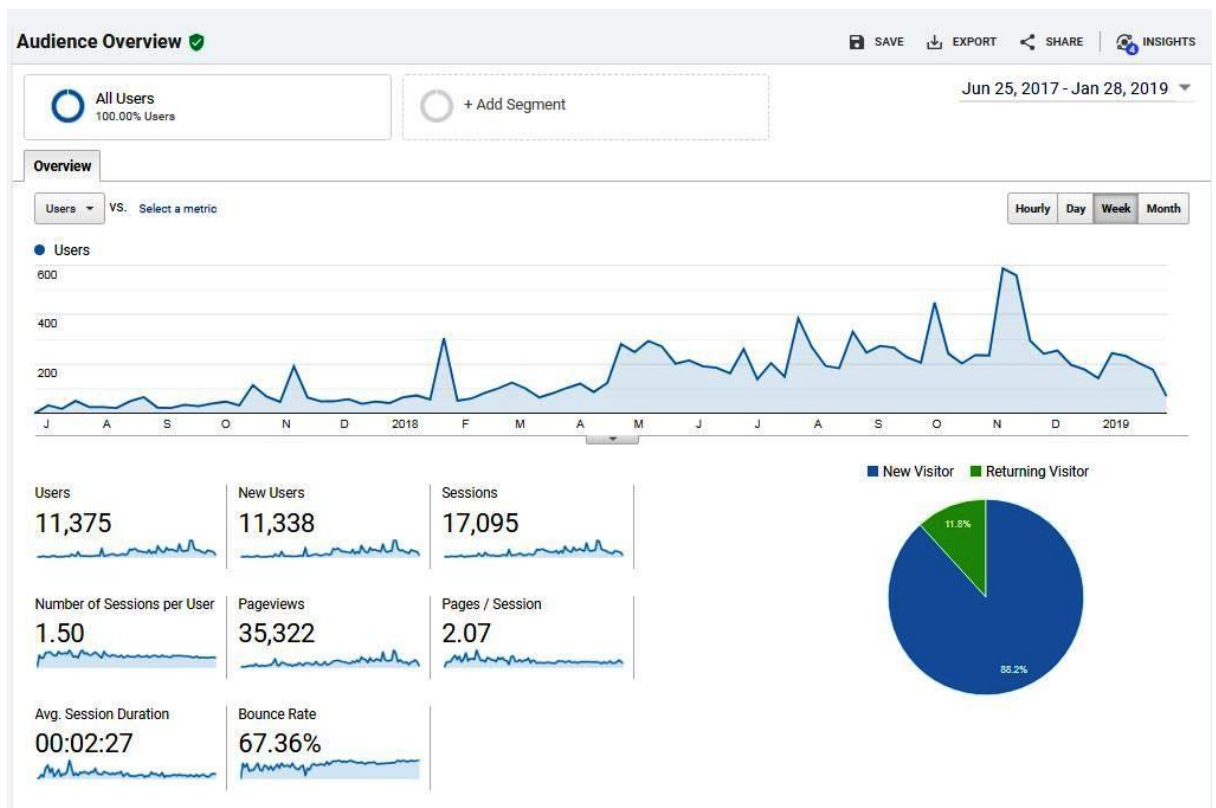
6.04 Social media

Much of the promotion and dissemination of the 'Away from the Western Front' project was carried out through social media, especially Twitter (@aftwf1418). By the end of the project there had been 930 tweets and there were 293 followers. Specific events were promoted through Twitter, on occasion by direct messages. For instance, the Creative Writing Competition went to 63 Twitter accounts, 39 of which endorsed the project by re-tweeting, thus reaching a total of 82109 followers.

Furthermore, Twitter enabled the project to maintain communication with people and organisations interested in the FWW away from the Western Front, resulting in individuals contacting the project with research queries and to follow up interesting news reports. An example of this was the link with Commonwealth War Graves Commission staff in Gaza, which allowed the project to add a page on [Perspectives from Palestine](#) showing how Palestinian schools visited the cemetery to pay their respects to soldiers buried there. In addition, descendants of soldiers and nurses featured in the project were found through Twitter.

6.05 Website





















Google Analytics has shown that the 'Away from the Western Front' project website achieved increasing use. The chart below shows the numbers of users over the 18 months from July 2017 to January 2019 inclusive.



The most important thing in this chart is the gradually increasing use over the course of the project. The high spike at the right coincides with the centenary of the end of the FWW. There was a smaller but noticeable spike in November 2017. The spike in January 2018 seems to be an anomaly – it represents 252 individual users on 22 January, compared to 9 on 21 January and 7 on 23 January. After November 2018, numbers tailed off as the project activities drew to a close. The chart below shows monthly users (dark blue) matched against the duration of a session (light blue) and reflects the time spent developing the website early in the project.



A further chart shows the country of origin of users during the same period.

Country	Users	% Users
1.  United Kingdom	5,073	 44.75%
2.  United States	2,649	 23.37%
3.  France	539	 4.75%
4.  Australia	489	 4.31%
5.  Canada	236	 2.08%
6.  Greece	185	 1.63%
7.  Italy	179	 1.58%
8.  India	170	 1.50%
9.  Germany	149	 1.31%
10.  Turkey	86	 0.76%

These figures are misleading. It is worth relating them to the ‘bounce rate’ – the record of users who visited only one page on the site, for only a few seconds, and who were therefore not real ‘users’. These users are not genuine visitors, interested in the content of the website, but are more likely to be commercial researchers looking for sales opportunities – indeed, probably automated researchers. An average bounce rate is 40%. On the AFTWF website, of the USA figures 84% were ‘bouncers’ with an average session of less than one second. In England, by comparison, there was a 54% bounce rate, with an average session length of 3.5 seconds. Overall, the average bounce rate for the site was 67%, largely accounted for by the high US figures. Even taking into account the high proportion of ‘irrelevant’ users, the breakdown by country reflects the countries and regions involved in the campaigns away from the Western Front. This evaluation survey did not compare web usage figures with other comparable non-commercial FWW websites. The HLF would be able to collate such information if required.

7.00 Qualitative evaluation

7.01 Qualitative evaluation findings

The findings of qualitative evaluation demonstrate the deep impact that this project has had on the people who have taken part. Staff responsible for running the regional projects have written reports of their own and selected quotations have been included in this report to illustrate the impact of the project, along with centrally-run elements of AFTWF – the conference, music project, creative writing competition. In addition, each of the web pages assigned to the sub-projects include feedback sections where users comments can be seen.

7.02 Knowledge and understanding

People learnt about new aspects of the history of the First World War. The following quotations illustrate how the project achieved heritage learning on many levels: historical, personal, experiential and professional.

Geographical aspects of the FWW away from the Western Front:

- *I was not aware of the contribution of forces from the West Indies – a poignant song, and great to get some recording experience with excellent singers (Music project volunteer)*
- *I have only eaten corn (maize) bread in the USA before, I didn't realise it came from Greece (Holst project event attendee)*
- *I didn't know the war had been fought near Greece (Holst project event attendee)*
- *I have visited Salonika & knew nothing about it! (Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition visitor)*
- *All I really knew was that there was a war or something between Germany and England and some other places and that was it. (Young person participating in Islington project)*
- *I didn't know WWI was in Egypt, like I knew there were pharaohs and pyramids In Egypt ... but I didn't know that WWI continued into Egypt. (Young person participating in Islington project)*
- *We found out that the war spread far and wide and also took part in Palestine where Jesus had been. (Young person participating in 'Holy Lands' project)*

Medical issues:

- *I have learnt a great deal about the range of the campaigns away from the Western Front – and the awful loss of life as a result of illness rather than conflict. (Conference delegate)*
- *I hadn't realised how many had died from illness and malaria. (Audience member attending school drama production)*

Mental health issues:

- *When they came back, you can relate that to us lot leaving the army, that's the point when you feel completely lost, alone, abandoned and they felt that on a much greater scale than we did. (Military veteran participating in Salonika project)*
- *They didn't have jobs, they had nothing – no support – there was no understanding of mental health, they were just written off. (Military veteran participating in Salonika project)*
- *It wasn't just them, the ones coming back, the whole family was broken [by the experience]. (Military veteran participating in Salonika project)*
- *I think that feeling of abandonment is standard. (Military veteran participating in Salonika project)*
- *It made me consider not only the physical impact but the mental impact. It made me consider their life changes **after** the army instead of just **during**. (Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition visitor)*

Increased awareness of differences and similarities between life now and a century ago:

- *This week changed how I thought about WWI in terms of the officers and how they treated the local Egyptian guides because when you learn about it (WWI) you don't of*

course think about the British being wrong but then you find out they could be brutal towards the guides. (Young person participating in Islington project)

- *I knew they were religious but it surprised me how much. (Young person participating in 'Holy Lands' project)*
- *I was shocked at how our modern day veterans' thoughts and feelings mirror those of the soldiers during the First World War. (Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition visitor)*
- *The similarities between the experiences of a soldier from WW1 and today were striking. (Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition visitor)*

Participants were able to consider the legacy of the FWW:

- *Working in service went out of fashion, people didn't want to do it any more, because they saw rich people with butlers and all that and thought – well, they realised [after the war], these people were no better than them. (Military veteran participating in Salonika project)*

Another example of the legacy of the FWW becoming part of the project was when young people in North Devon were able to interview Palestinians through a Skype link, asking questions about life there now. This is available on the film of the project.

Individual soldiers' stories helped participants to understand history from a personal perspective:

- *My experience learning about WWI in school it was much more serious and focused on the trauma and bad stuff... but what we learnt this week the soldiers that served they did it for their country and there were also good times in the army... like when Gibson climbed the pyramids. (Young person participating in Islington project)*
- *Often you think of soldiers as one... but you need to remember that each soldier has his own story and he's not just part of a whole group. (Young person participating in Islington project)*
- *It's all about individuals' journeys, rather than just war. (Sandham Memorial Chapel exhibition visitor)*
- *Thank you for the opportunity to share a tale of love forged in the horror of war between people who would never have met in peace time. (Creative Writing Competition winner)*
- *I already knew what it meant to have a father in the military and not seeing him for a long time (I didn't see my father for over 7 months) but with this project I realised how difficult was for them to be far from home fighting a war and also how terrible it must have been for the families at home to hear that their relatives had died and that they were buried here in Turin, where nobody could have gone to visit them. (Italian student, Turin)*

In addition to learning about campaigns away from the Western Front, participants increased their knowledge of local history:

- *All about the campaigning to Mesopotamia. How we actually fought. How locals from near me helped out. (School student participating in 'Lancashire to Mesopotamia' project)*

- *That a soldier that lived around 10 mins away actually fought there, and how not all of WW1 was fought in France. (School student participating in 'Lancashire to Mesopotamia' project)*
- *It has made it so local – the thought that the actors are of an age that would actually be participating in the war for real. (Audience member attending school drama production)*
- *Meeting relatives of the war Diarist was extraordinary, visiting his Church and finding personal, signed Prayer books was almost a spiritual "meant to happen" moment. These have now been deposited in the Museum! Sharing the feelings, respect and admiration that I had formed from spending weeks immersed in these Diaries, was clearly an emotional and unexpected experience for the Soldier's relative, and a sincere, unique privilege for me. (North Devon museum volunteer researcher)*

The project incorporated opportunities for experiential learning, allowing direct contact with historical sources:

- *I think that if you simply read what is written in history books, then you can only get a grasp of the situation. Instead the fact that we focused on eighteen soldiers, their life and their service as soldiers changed everything! In this way we managed to figure out how terrible and silly WW1 was. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *This experience helped me because I think that, for the first time, I thought about the real meaning of the war. Looking at the tombstones of the soldiers at the cemetery, I thought that we have to thank them for what they did: they fought for our freedom and to give us a better life. Then, studying their life and their history, it was like knowing them as if they were still alive. (Italian student, Turin)*

Participants were able to consider the roles carried out by animals in the FWW away from the Western Front, which were often different from those carried out in Northern Europe:

- *I learnt about the death toll of animals in war and the key part they played. (Devon 14 year old)*
- *As the weeks went on and everybody was talking about how many horses had died, that caught my attention (volunteer participant in quilting project)*
- *My great-grandfather, George Ayres, fought in WWI in the Royal Horse Artillery. He loved his horses and it broke his heart when they were hurt. He survived every major battle, and came home, gassed, to his 5 year old son Bert, my grandad, who was so proud of him. God bless you for this fantastic piece of important history! (Event attendee, quilting project)*

A key area of the project was to raise participants' awareness of different perspectives of the FWW.

- *Thanks to this activity I learned that during the First World War many people died all over the world (Italian student, Turin)*
- *[I learnt about] the Italian connection outlined by 'The Turin Men'. (UK Conference delegate)*
- *I really liked the fact that we found the descendants of the Welsh and Australian soldiers (Italian student, Turin)*

- *It has helped me want to find out about people around the world. (Young person participating in 'Holy Lands' project)*
- *I didn't have any knowledge of the impact of the WW1 in Iran before joining the project. Even the history text books taught in Iran didn't provide sufficient and accurate information about the WW1 in Iran and its consequences for Iranian people. Most people in the Western countries are not aware of the sufferings of Iranian people during the WW1 probably because Iran is not located in Europe and was a neutral country in the war. I think I now understand why the history repeats itself. I believe teaching history of the WW1 must be improved in Iran and Britain to provide a more comprehensive and impartial picture of the war in Iran and other countries. (Iranian participant)*
- *I didn't know much about the WW1 in Iran before joining the Iranian Association's project. I have been sharing the stories with my family and friends. The ordinary Iranians paid a high cost in the WW1. (Iranian participant)*
- *I was shocked to learn that a neutral country like Iran that played no part in starting the war had probably suffered more than most countries which were fighting each other. (Iranian participant)*
- *The song went down well with the audience, who were proud to have included a song with this content within our service. I was thanked personally by several other community members for representing previously unrepresented groups. (Choir director)*

People learnt about new ways to present history to wider audiences:

- *I believe that all the research and events that have taken place as part of the centenary period – such as 'Away from the Western Front' and its associated projects – have helped ensure that today's children are better informed about this subject than many earlier generations. The Heritage Lottery Fund has been crucial in bringing this and so many other 'heritage' based initiatives to life. (Conference delegate)*
- *I learned too many facts to list but what has struck me is the ways in which the past can be made relevant, accessible and important today. Thank you J. (Conference delegate)*
- *The value to young people involved is my most positive impression. (Conference delegate)*
- *It was great to see how all the individual projects have been linked together and how they have a permanent record via the website. (Conference delegate)*
- *A real insight in to how the story affected young people. Also, how the use of physical theatre can help show deep feelings and multiple viewpoints. (Castle Drogo audience member)*
- *Visitors have been seen wiping tears away and have commented on the impact of young people sharing their interpretation of the story. (National Trust staff member)*

People learnt about how to manage a heritage event:

- *A particularly well-organised and structured event with a practical exposition of cross-organisational co-operation. (Conference delegate)*
- *Particularly successful: the use of 'short' speeches made it move along very well and gave just a wide variety of topics; the excellent use Lottery money has been put to*

involving many communities and age groups. A brilliant and informative day. Many thanks. (Conference delegate)

- *[I learnt] how a small amount of money can go a long way in helping people engage and learn when there is such good co-ordination. (Conference delegate)*

7.03 Skills

A wide range of skills were developed through the 'Away from the Western Front' Project including 'soft' skills such as teamwork as well as more subject-specific skills, as illustrated by the quotes in this section.

'Soft skills'

Teamwork, communication and presentation skills were developed through several activities.

- *The participants were initially very daunted at the idea of producing art or generating ideas for the project. It was a particular criterion of the project that each participant would develop their own individual response in a medium that suited them. This was perhaps particularly challenging for a group of veterans who were used to being given clear instructions rather than free rein to follow through their own ideas. By the end of the project however, they were quite confident to propose ideas and to reflect on their own and each other's work, looking for symbolism and crossovers that would communicate the message they wanted to get across. (Project leader, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *We had a great time performing and teaching the audience something that shouldn't be forgotten. (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*
- *Patience! (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *Working together to a set formula (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *I have never been able to draw, especially animals, but a friend came to the rescue. (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *The Alabaré veterans who took part in this project developed skills. There were general skills such as discussion, observation, historical enquiry and teamwork. (Project leader, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *How to work as a group on research (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*
- *Parts of it have been very hard work and it took a lot of patience (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*
- *Speaking in front of people, due to anxiety (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*

Historical skills

Research-based projects inevitably helped participants to develop their skills in historical enquiry.

- *I learned to look deeper for information (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*
- *I have learned new research skills since starting the project and have discovered more aspects of Mesopotamia and WW1. I have also improved my teamwork skills (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*

Drama skills

The formal activities with schools and young people gave them opportunities to develop and enhance their drama skills.

- *It improved my confidence in performing (Okehampton GCSE drama student)*
- *I have a feeling of reassurance and a feeling of professionalism (Okehampton GCSE drama student)*
- *I felt a great sense of community and teamwork whilst being involved. I also felt that there was a lot of freedom over the devising which was really enjoyable. (Okehampton GCSE drama student)*
- *I developed a greater understanding of the techniques of physical theatre. (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*
- *We represented the horses very well and it was very convincing. (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*
- *We all managed to perform on hay, which was very hard! (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*
- *I have learnt not to give up on things because even if it seems confusing, you will end up having an amazing show. (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*

Art and craft skills

In spite of some early doubts ...

- *It sounded interesting but probably beyond my stitching capabilities (Minehead quilting group member)*

... the creative activities certainly enhanced and developed participants' artistic skills.

- *How to create free motion stitching using my sewing machine and a quilting foot (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *I learnt how to draw a horse! (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *How materials can depict landscapes, buildings etc. (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *I'm going to use yellow [for Autumn], 'cause it's bright and happy...and that is what they would have been thinking of in that cold, dreaming of being back home, back with their families (Military veteran, Salonika project)*
- *Participants developed artistic skills such as monoprinting, silk-dye printing, photo layering and photo transfers. (Project leader, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *[I learnt]...different forms of animation, something you don't get to know in real life.....[it] makes me want to do more in this direction, try more animation in the future ... this gives you a nice foundation (Young person in animation workshop, Islington)*
- *I enjoyed seeing the stories come to life... I'm now going to try and convince my art teacher for A level to let me do something with animation for my project... I can say I've done it so I know how to do it. (Young person in animation workshop, Islington)*
- *Making storyboards (Yr. 9 school history student, Lancashire)*

Musical skills

- *We are only ten in number, and many of the members did not feel confident to sing the parts. However, whilst four members of the choir sang the tune, a group of four sang the alto line, with myself singing the soprano where it deviates from the tune and two chaps on the bass. (Choir director)*
- *Great to get some recording experience with excellent singers. (choir member)*

7.04 Attitudes, values and behaviour

It was a key objective of this project to change the way people think about the FWW away from the Western Front. This project undoubtedly had a huge impact on the people who took part, as shown in the quotes below which clearly demonstrate changes in attitude, not just to historical events but in terms of pre-conceived ideas about young people and improved perceptions of heritage.

Attitudes towards young people

- *These splendid volunteers through the projects are passing on to the younger generation about what took place. (Conference delegate)*
- *People of all ages are participating – it drags you in! (Conference delegate)*
- *It's easy to forget how young people are affected by the theme of conflict. I loved seeing how seriously they were taking their work. (Castle Drogo audience member)*
- *It is very moving to see how the young people were taken by the story. (Castle Drogo visitor)*
- *Engaging with them in a spontaneous and previously unexplored, unrehearsed way was mind blowing for me and a very new, enjoyable and effective experience for the young people. Their individual response was way beyond anything I could have imagined. (North Devon Museum volunteer attending drama workshop with young people)*
- *I was deeply moved by the children in the film trying to portray what the soldiers would have felt like. (Local history group member, North Devon)*

Attitudes towards war and peace

- *It changed how I perceived war from a 'heroic act' to a 'horrific action' (Okehampton GSCE drama student)*
- *We are just like those boys. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *Now, every time I hear something about the First World War, I feel in contact with the soldiers who died there. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *The activity and the visit to the cemetery really changed me. During the remembrance ceremony I felt the same way King George V described in his speech in 1922: "in the course of my pilgrimage, I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace than the massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war". (Italian student, Turin)*
- *The connection between two far off times, has much more things in common than anyone could ever think of, so personally, I think that the importance of history will*

play a substantial role in my life. I've learned that the truth beneath the surface should be discovered not only to preserve it and to keep it in mind as a lesson for life, but also to create a sort of connection between the thoughts of people who lived before us and the ones that someday will influence the world. (Italian student, Turin)

- *I saw a shocking photo of a pile of bodies of dead Iranians in the WW1 that made me extremely sad. I hate war even more now after learning about the sufferings in the WW1. The project helped me understand how the destinies of different nations are tied to each other. (Iranian Association volunteer researcher)*
- *There are still many untold stories about the WW1 in Iran. My research has shown that the stories about the WW1 in Iran have not been recorded properly. We come from a country that does not value awareness about history and we must do a lot more to raise awareness of the community about the WW1. (Iranian Association volunteer researcher)*

Changes in attitude towards heritage sites

- *It brought the chapel into a more serious light - whereas before it may have felt like more of an art gallery. (Sandham Memorial Chapel visitor)*
- *Not at all what I expected. Different but decidedly better. A unique & absorbing space. (Sandham Memorial Chapel visitor)*
- *It was mind blowing for me and a very new, enjoyable and effective experience for the young people. Their individual response was way beyond anything I could have imagined. (North Devon Museum volunteer attending drama workshop with young people)*
- *I was deeply moved by the children in the film trying to portray what the soldiers would have felt like. (Local history group member, North Devon)*
- *A commemorative as well as an artistic space (Sandham Memorial Chapel visitor after viewing 'Salonika Reflections' exhibition)*
- *Wonderfully intimate (Sandham Memorial Chapel visitor after viewing 'Salonika Reflections' exhibition)*

7.05 Creativity, inspiration and enjoyment

Participants and audiences alike were inspired by the project, partly through the close contact with historical evidence offered by working with museums and archives, but also through the choice to work through the medium of creativity.

The 'Away from the Western Front' project encouraged people to be creative in their responses to the heritage they encountered.

- *I want my work to be about peace, 'cause that's what they [troops in Salonika] wanted – we should be living in peace, not war. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *I'm thrilled, I think what we've produced together is amazing, just amazing. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *Holst lived here with soldiers (Child aged 7 who made a model YMCA hut, within the Holst project).*

- *I'm really proud, really proud of it..I think we've done a really good job, all of us, I think it's great. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*

The 'Away from the Western Front' project inspired people to develop their own ideas and research further.

- *Meeting experts and enthusiasts in the field of WW1 away from the Western Front, I have been inspired to learn more.(Conference delegate)*
- *Excellent and informative talks about community projects. Truly inspiring. (Conference delegate)*
- *I have lots of ideas, if I can prise more money out of my Trustees! (Conference delegate)*
- *[I have learnt] so much. [There's] so much I want to look more into now I've had this taster, particularly in terms of ethnic mix and the psychological inheritance of the descendants. (Conference delegate)*
- *It is inspiring to read the different interpretations of the competition's brief. (Creative Writing Competition entrant)*
- *Being able to give our volunteers more in depth research has given them a renewed sense of purpose and inspired them to spend more time working with the museum (Holst Birthplace Museum curator)*
- *Each of us was given a soldier, so I started getting some information about my soldier's private life and I actually took a liking to him. I was really amazed at the way I got involved! I would like each of us visit our soldiers every so often since it is as if we have adopted them. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *I believe that without ... this project, it would not have been possible to give our Turin men what they really deserve. They deserve to be remembered and I have committed myself to this project so that every year they will be honoured. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *Getting involved with this project and seeing all the blocks that others had done made me want to know more about the war. (Minehead quilting group member)*

The project offered people opportunities for reflection.

- *This activity at the Cimitero Monumentale in Turin ... was an object of reflection; it also made me think about Italian soldiers who served away from their homeland. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *Surely thanks to the activity ... I will always remember them and sometimes I will visit. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *This has been a very moving and emotional experience, I feel that I have got into someone else's life and seen the war from a completely different perspective. (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *Very thought-provoking (Sandham Memorial Chapel visitor after viewing 'Salonika Reflections' exhibition)*

People enjoyed the activities offered through the 'Away from the Western Front' project.

- *Very impressed by the dedication and amazing research on the variety of topics covered today. (Conference delegate)*

- *It has been enormously enjoyable to play with John he is such a talent (Holst project musician).*
- *I enjoyed the music, my granny sang these songs (Holst project event attendee).*
- *I have really enjoyed researching a different side to Holst especially reading his letters to Isobel (Holst Birthplace Museum volunteer).*
- *During the remembrance I felt happy because the soldiers for the first time received our gratitude for their role during the Great War. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *After months of organising, being in the cemetery in front of these soldiers was emotional. I was really moved during the ceremony when each of us read some poems. I felt happy for these soldiers who finally had someone who remembered them. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *I loved decorating the wooden crosses with the phrase we had chosen to honour our soldier. Personally I think it was a beautiful moment. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *The activity at the cemetery was definitely the best part of the project. Not just because we prepared for two months to be there, but because we finally met the soldiers, and with the poppies and crosses we were all together to honour them. A feeling I will never forget was when I entered the cemetery and I saw the exact place where the gravestones are situated. I tried to imagine it before, but it was definitely different from what I saw in the cemetery, it was like I was visiting someone I've known, not for very long, but surely someone I felt very close to. (Italian student, Turin)*
- *I very much enjoyed performing 'Dyrons Boys' and we made the audience cry. It really impacted everyone. It was the best performance I have even been in. (Newton Abbot GCSE drama student)*
- *I liked being part of a group working towards the final piece. (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *We were working towards one goal, it brought everyone together. (Minehead quilting group member)*
- *At the start, one lady was not very interested in the project or the subject and was a little negative about it all. She refused to complete the baseline questionnaire. However, she read Susan's book and helped the others with questions about their squares. She was instrumental in the construction of the banner at the end of the project. I drew up a separate end of project questionnaire for her and this time she completed it. I was surprised with her comments, which included that she learned patience, adaptability and problem solving. The part she enjoyed the most about her contribution was "stretching my mind again, and then I got to enjoy it". She said that she had learned how many horses and mules were involved and also commented that she was surprised at how the group got involved in the project. I consider that this was a success, considering her attitude at the start of the project! (Project manager, 'Horses in the War' project)*
- *It was a wonderful experience and I have gone away very happy surrounded by brilliant people. (Okehampton GCSE drama student)*
- *I don't think there is a single person who has been to one of these that hasn't enjoyed it. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *I would do it again, if it was like over the whole summer I would come every day if I could come. (Young person after Islington animation workshop)*

- *[I enjoyed] creating my project, researching it. (Yr. 9 student, Lancashire)*
- *I liked making the tapestry because it was fun. (Yr. 9 student, Lancashire)*
- *I enjoyed looking at artefacts from the First World War. (Yr. 9 student, Lancashire)*
- *I got to work with my friends. (Yr. 9 student, Lancashire)*
- *Learning about the war away from the Western Front in respect of the song was a fun way to learn. I might not have learnt about this if it was not for this activity. (Singer with music project)*
- *For many of the choir it was the highlight of the work we have done over the last four years. We were proud to sing in remembrance of various less remembered groups, ending our performance with this stirring song. The song went down well with the audience, who were proud to have included a song with this content within our service. I was thanked personally by several other community members for representing previously unrepresented groups, and for doing so in an entertaining way. The song appealed to the wide age-range present too. (Choir director after performing 'No Parades' at a Remembrance Concert)*

For some participants, the project had therapeutic benefits.

- *I won't need to go to mindfulness because this is so relaxing. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*
- *Art is therapeutic – I think it's because you can lose yourself, I'm definitely going to get some paint and fabric myself. (Military veteran, 'Salonika Stories' project)*

8.00 The difference made by the project

8.01 To heritage

A key aim of 'Away from the Western Front' was to raise people's awareness about lesser known aspects of the FWW. As shown in section 7.02, people's knowledge and understanding of the heritage of the FWW improved in many ways – not just the geographical factors but issues such as medical history, mental health, the role of animals, different perspectives and the legacy of the war which can still be felt today, especially in the Middle East.

The project was not concerned with the conservation of the physical heritage so the difference relates more to attitudes, as noted above (7.04). As a result of this project, heritage became more relevant. Perhaps the most important achievement of the project in this respect was to enable people to identify with the heritage, thus giving it a place in today's society rather than in some other world. Examples of this were:

- In Salisbury, homeless military veterans under the care of the charity Alabaré recognised through their research and creative work that their own experiences in the services were not dissimilar to those of the soldiers in Salonika a century before. As one veteran put it: *When they came back, you can relate that to us lot leaving the army, that's the point when you feel completely lost, alone, abandoned and they felt that on a much greater scale than we did.* The project altered their perception of the heritage they were encountering – both the records of the FWW and the paintings by Stanley Spencer in the National Trust's Sandham Memorial Chapel. Furthermore, as evidenced by the quotes from visitors to the chapel, this enabled wider audiences to gain a deeper connection with the heritage of the FWW by recognising that today's veterans are going through similar experiences to their forebears: *I was shocked at*

how our modern day veterans' thoughts and feelings mirror those of the soldiers during the First World War.

- In many places (e.g. Cheltenham, Castle Drogo, Newton Abbot, North Devon, Preston, Islington, Turin) people encountered the heritage in ways which helped them to identify with the soldiers' stories, by allowing them to unlock their emotional responses through creative activities. This connection came about because modern audiences walked in the footsteps of the people they were studying, visiting places where they had lived and worked, and sometimes handled items belonging to the people they were following. As a result the heritage was undoubtedly changed in the minds of the participants and these new understandings passed on through creative activities to wider audiences engaged through the project. This was well put by an Italian student in Turin: *studying their life and their history, it was like knowing them as if they were still alive.*

8.02 To people

Undoubtedly the project made a difference to the people who took part in it and those who saw its outputs. It offered them new experiences in new contexts.

Freelancers and museum staff learnt a lot from the project, not just by finding out more about history but also by setting up engaging activities and working with highly creative people through the medium of heritage.

Volunteers became involved through carrying out research into local links to the war away from the Western Front. The project added another dimension by bringing them into contact with young people. Seeing young people engaging with history and making meaning from it – gave them a very positive view of younger generations, as evidenced in some of the comments in 7.04.

Particular examples of changes to people were:

- In Turin, 17-18 year-old Italian students encountered what was to them a new area of history, and this opened their eyes to their idea of commemoration, remembrance and reconciliation. *We are just like those boys*, said one. They also saw war cemeteries in a new light.
- For Iranians living in London, the project introduced them to their own history and made them think about trying to raise awareness further, as expressed by one volunteer: *We come from a country that does not value awareness about history and we must do a lot more to raise awareness of the community about the WW1.*
- The project gave some young people valuable experiences which encouraged them to think about their future studies. For instance one student attending the animation workshops in Islington said: *I'm now going to try and convince my art teacher for A level to let me do something with animation for my project... I can say I've done it so I know how to do it.* Another said: *[I learnt]...different forms of animation, something you don't get to know in real life.....[it] makes me want to do more in this direction, try more animation in the future ... this gives you a nice foundation.* An Italian student wrote: *The connection between two far off times, has much more things in common than anyone could ever think of, so personally, I think that the importance of history will play a substantial role in my life. I've learned that the truth beneath the surface should be discovered not only to preserve it and to keep it in mind as a lesson for life, but also to create a sort of connection between the thoughts of people who lived before us and the ones that someday will influence the world.*

- The project broadened people's perspectives, not just in terms of the wider history of the FWW but also in seeing how other people and cultures viewed the history. For example, following a Skype interview with two Palestinian teenagers, one 12 year old in Devon wrote: *It has helped me want to find out about people around the world.*
- For many participants the project gave a huge boost to their confidence. One 14 year old wrote: *I very much enjoyed performing 'Dyrons Boys' and we made the audience cry. It really impacted everyone. It was the best performance I have even been in.* One of the Salisbury military veterans wrote: *I'm thrilled, I think what we've produced together is amazing, just amazing.*

8.03 To communities

This was a wide ranging project, with sub-projects taking place in different parts of the country and abroad. In general, the main difference made to communities was to link them with their local heritage and to offer local people opportunities to see how other members of the community interpreted this heritage. Here are some examples of the difference made to communities:

- In Okehampton, Devon, local people were able to see younger members of the community in a new light. *Visitors have been seen wiping tears away and have commented on the impact of young people sharing their interpretation of the story.* Another audience member wrote: *It's easy to forget how young people are affected by the theme of conflict. I loved seeing how seriously they were taking their work.*
- In Newton Abbot, Devon, students in a local school engaged with the local museum and the 'Away from the Western Front' project to uncover the story behind a well-known local family and the house in which they lived, which is now part of the school. Their home-grown drama production, 'Dyrons Boys' interpreted this for the local community, with similarly emotional responses from the audience: *I very much enjoyed performing 'Dyrons Boys' and we made the audience cry. It really impacted everyone. It was the best performance I have even been in.*
- In Lancashire there was an awareness that many local soldiers fought away from the Western Front as some of the local regiments were part of the Indian Army. Now that many Lancashire communities include significant percentages of ethnic Indians and Pakistanis this heritage becomes even more significant. The 'Lancashire to Mesopotamia' project explored this heritage and brought the stories to wider audiences through the county-wide spread of the project, within four secondary schools.
- In Cheltenham a community project offered a new perspective on local composer Gustav Holst. Many still know his 'Planets' orchestral pieces today, but few knew that he also served in Salonika at the end of the FWW. This project brought the story to the community around the Holst Birthplace Museum, focusing not only on his music but also on his letters home which – like many soldiers' letters – showed a keen interest in food!
- In London, the Iranian community was able to explore their national heritage through this project. A small group of Iranian-born volunteers researched their country's experience of the war, bringing it to the attention of their fellow ex-pats.
- In North Devon there are still rural farming communities, although less prevalent than they were a century ago. The 'Holy Lands' sub-project sought to re-connect small

village communities with their heritage. Carrying out research into lads who left the villages and went to war, local people discovered that the soldiers – who came from a strong religious background and were very familiar with stories from the Bible lands – actually travelled to the Holy Land and saw Gaza, Beersheba and Jerusalem for themselves. The project brought local people closer to their religious as well as their social and global heritage. As one volunteer researcher wrote: *Meeting relatives of the war Diarist was extraordinary, visiting his Church and finding personal, signed Prayer books was almost a spiritual "meant to happen" moment. These have now been deposited in the Museum! Sharing the feelings, respect and admiration that I had formed from spending weeks immersed in these Diaries, was clearly an emotional and unexpected experience for the Soldier's relative, and a sincere, unique privilege for me.*

- In Italy there is very little public knowledge about the First World War apart from the Italians' own campaign against the Austro-Hungarian forces in the North East of the country. The 'Turin Men' sub-project gave local people a glimpse of the much wider reach of the FWW, by bringing detailed stories of 18 individual British soldiers buried in war graves near Turin. The project achieved significant local and national media interest, raising Italians' awareness of the FWW away from the Western Front.

9.00 Review

9.01 What worked well and why

The creative approach

The chosen creative approach was a good way to interpret the subject, leading to deep engagement with the stories on a personal level.

The work all arose from the historical record, but was interpreted for a modern audience. It worked well in introducing century-old stories in a modern context, through the use of innovative and engaging projects.

Skills development

The range of activities allowed participants to develop new skills (see 7.03), including 'soft' skills such as teamwork and presentation and more specific skills linked to the creative activities, such as art, animation and drama skills. Where projects were linked to formal learning organisations such as schools, these skills could be formalised and integrated into pre-defined learning objectives, such as GCSE courses. Thus participants were able to hone their skills in historical enquiry, historical interpretation and drama techniques.

Digital media

The online presence of the project acted as an effective focus, bringing together local projects in one place so that wider audiences could benefit from them. With new technology making film increasingly accessible, the results could be filmed and developed using high-street equipment and easily viewed on a wide range of devices.

In addition, experts agreed to support the project by writing or editing articles about FWW campaigns away from the Western Front, resulting in a sound thematic framework for the subject matter of the project. These articles were aimed at the general reader rather than the academic, resulting in an accessible community resource.

Social media

The use of Twitter as the main vehicle for publicity linked the project in with the wider FWW research community, including other centenary projects. It also kept the profile of 'Away from the Western Front' high, so that even smaller stories could be publicised.

Partnership working

The regional projects were only possible if a suitable partner organisation came forward. There had to be a vested interest in the subject in order for these organisations to commit time and in-kind resources so that the results could be mutually beneficial. The less successful sub-projects (see 9.02) failed due to lack of commitment on the part of the partner. Nevertheless additional partners were found later in the project to replace the two sub-projects which did not proceed.

Raising awareness about the global nature of the FWW and its relevance to us today

The feedback (see 7.02 and 7.04 especially) has demonstrated that the aim to raise awareness about the FWW away from the Western Front was successful.

9.02 What didn't work and why

Engaging audiences

Although the project achieved many satisfying results (see 6.01), there were difficulties in engaging audiences for some of the sub-projects:

- Secondary schools were suited to the content, as the FWW is covered in the National Curriculum at Yr. 9, and Creative Arts departments could incorporate the work into their GCSE and A level exam courses. However the project relied on the input of teachers who had substantial other pressures on their time. As a result one Lancashire school had to withdraw (due to staff illness) and other schools delivered the activity with small lunchtime clubs, due to curriculum pressures. In the two Devon projects which worked with secondary schools there were significant delays due to key staff being unable to devote time to the project.
- For the 'Salonika Stories' project, the target audience – homeless military veterans – was exceedingly challenging. Partnering with the Alabaré charity made it possible to consider this highly relevant audience, but the fragile and unpredictable nature of the participants meant that it was a challenge to enrol and maintain the numbers expected.
- It had been hoped that the 'Lancashire to Mesopotamia' project would be enhanced by involving young Iraqi nationals living in the UK. However in spite of considerable effort, working through Iraqi professionals and schools with Iraqi populations, there was no take-up for the project. This was probably due to the fact that there is not a cohesive Iraqi community in the UK, unlike other ethnic groups, and also there was no serendipitous advocate who could facilitate a route in to the community and sign up participants. Additional effort was made to set up links with schools in Iraq, with a view to organising Skype exchanges between students, but this was also unsuccessful in spite of active support from the British Council and the British Institute for the Study of Iraq.

Partnership difficulties

Although partnerships led to successes in most cases (see 9.01), there were also problems arising from partnerships.

- Two of the projects had to be halted early due to the partner organisation's lack of capacity to deliver the planned outcomes. In both cases this happened where the model of funding freelancers to deliver the activities was not followed, and central staff found that they did not have the time to manage their project effectively. During the mid-term review the HLF agreed to transfer the previously-assigned funds to new partnership projects in 2018.
- Even the better-managed sub-projects noted in their evaluation reports that the pressure on central staff to deliver a project outside their main remit was challenging.
- In two cases ('Food Away from the Western Front' and 'Health – the Hidden Enemy') difficulties in engaging third parties led to problems. In the former, the charity originally signed up to deliver the main event withdrew due to staff illness, with the result that audience numbers for the event were reduced. In the latter, Army Medical Regiments proved unable to take part due to existing work pressures, so the project had to be redesigned.

Take-up of national activities

The two main national activities – the Creative Writing Competition and the National Music Project – were poorly taken up in spite of extensive promotion.

- The Creative Writing Competition received only 80 entries in spite of an energetic social media campaign. There was only one entry in the under 11 category, and this was discounted because it failed to meet the rules of the competition – indeed about a third of the entrants obviously misunderstood the title 'Away from the Western Front', thinking it included the home front, in spite of clear guidelines in the rules.²³ Another factor which might have reduced the take-up was the proximity to the much better funded competition for schools, run by 'Never Such Innocence'. With its much smaller capacity to publicise its competition, 'Away from the Western Front' was not able to reach a wider audience. With hindsight, it seems have been optimistic to expect a higher number of entrants.
- The National Music Project set out to encourage musicians to perform a new FWW song commissioned from a well-known composer. In spite of extensive promotion – again mainly via Twitter, but also including press articles and targeted emails – take-up was well below the expected levels. In the event, only two choirs and one brass band performed the piece. It is not known exactly why this happened but from the responses from bands and choirs which gave reasons for not performing the song, it was probably because they already had a well-established FWW repertoire and did not have the time to learn a new piece. Where it was performed, the song went down very well, as noted in the comment towards the end of 7.05.

9.03 If there had been no project, would some of the outcomes have happened anyway?

The time was right for this project: as part of the FWW centenary, 'Away from the Western Front' was able to build on research, interest and knowledge which had been developed

²³ One explanation – not backed up by hard evidence – could be that people opportunistically entered poems and short stories which they had already written before hearing about the AFTWF competition.

between 2014 and 2018. The project would not have had such an impact at any other time, and indeed it would have been hard to sign up partner organisations except during the centenary years, as their forward plans would have focused on other initiatives.

The aim of the project to raise awareness about the FWW away from the Western Front and with such a wide scope it was able to bring together subjects and issues which might otherwise have only achieved prominence in localities. This could not have been achieved without a national project.

Undoubtedly some of the skills mentioned in 7.03 would have happened if the project had not taken place. What the project offered was a focus, through which such skills could be brought together to achieve a deeper understanding of a period of history. This would never have happened without the project.

Finally, the project offered an opportunity for people to find out about past events and to give them new meaning for people in the future. This was very well put by a 17 year-old Italian student who took part in the 'Turin Men' project: *I've learned that the truth beneath the surface should be discovered not only to preserve it and to keep it in mind as a lesson for life, but also to create a sort of connection between the thoughts of people who lived before us and the ones that someday will influence the world.*

10.00 Associated documents and videos

10.01 Evaluation reports of regional projects and other activities

The following reports are available from the 'Away from the Western Front' website. They provide additional detail in support of this main evaluation report:

- National Conference: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AFTWF-conference-evaluation.pdf>
- National Music Project (demo choir evaluation notes): <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Choir-evaluation.pdf>
- Food Away from the Western Front: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Food-Away-from-The-Western-Front-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
- The Turin Men: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Turin-Men-evaluation-report.pdf>
- A Family Goes to War: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/A-Family-Goes-to-War-project-evaluation.pdf>
- Horses in the War: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Horses-in-the-War-evaluation-report.pdf>
- Castle Drogo to Salonika: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Castle-Drogo-to-Salonika-evaluation-report.pdf>
- Salonika Stories: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Salonika-Stories-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
- From Islington to Egypt, Palestine and Syria: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AFTWF-Islington-Project-Evaluation.pdf>

- Holy Lands: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Holy-Lands-evaluation-report.pdf>
- From Lancashire to Mesopotamia: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Evaluation-Report-L2M-.pdf>
- The First World War –the Iranian Perspective: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Iranian-Association-WW1-Project-Report.pdf>

10.02 Videos

Videos were made to record some of the project activities. In many cases these also include interviews with participants and audiences, some of which have been quoted in this report.

- National Conference: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/conference/>
- Food Away from the Western Front: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/food-away-from-the-western-front/holst-project-film/>
- Castle Drogo to Salonika: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/castle-drogo-to-salonika/castle-drogo-film/>
- From Islington to Egypt, Palestine and Syria: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/from-islington-to-egypt-palestine-and-syria/feedback/>
- Holy Lands: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/holy-lands/holy-lands-film/>
- From Lancashire to Mesopotamia: <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/projects/from-lancashire-to-mesopotamia/arts/>

10.03 Appendix 1

A mind map produced by a teenage participant in the Islington project. In pink are his initial thoughts about the subject – the FWW in the Middle East – and in blue are comments representing his greater understanding. Of particular interest is his comment ‘The Finsbury Rifles, our local regiment fought there’, which indicates that he has taken ownership of his local heritage.

