

# Partnerships and collaboration on a local, national and international level

## WHY?

- Increase advocacy
- To please funders!
- So material doesn't 'get lost'
- Skill sharing
- New audiences
- Extend the reach of material in own collections
- Cross sectorial collaborations
- New funding opportunities
- Increase awareness of collecting activity in communities and educate people about how to donate material
- New creative partners/new interpretation of material
- New and different insights and ideas – this can include INTERNAL partners
- Opportunity to work with unusual partners e.g. military organisations
- Shared themes/subjects e.g. public health
- Nature of some resources mean partnership is they only way forward and only way to get a wider reach

## HOW?

- Partnerships need to be bigger than the sum of their parts especially for legacy
- Intelligence gathering – how have groups worked in partnership in the past?
- Need a well-defined OFFER – what will you be contributing to the partnership?
- Need a clear idea of what you want, what are the intended OUTCOMES of the partnership – are they the same for all partners? Can it be flexible to incorporate the unexpected?
- Must have mutual benefit, all partners bring different material/perspectives
- FIND A UNIQUE ANGLE FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP
- Partners might have complementary material OR might have interesting contrast
- Need well developed project plan and focus
- TRUST is essential but NOT EASY
- For new partnerships need to be open minded and use personal contact
- Look at the track record of organisations
- Have you got shared values?
- Be positive and open to new ideas and ways of working

## WHO?

Can include internal partners – steering groups useful to co-ordinate efforts – also can help to move it on to a strategic level that has more weight and will be listened to

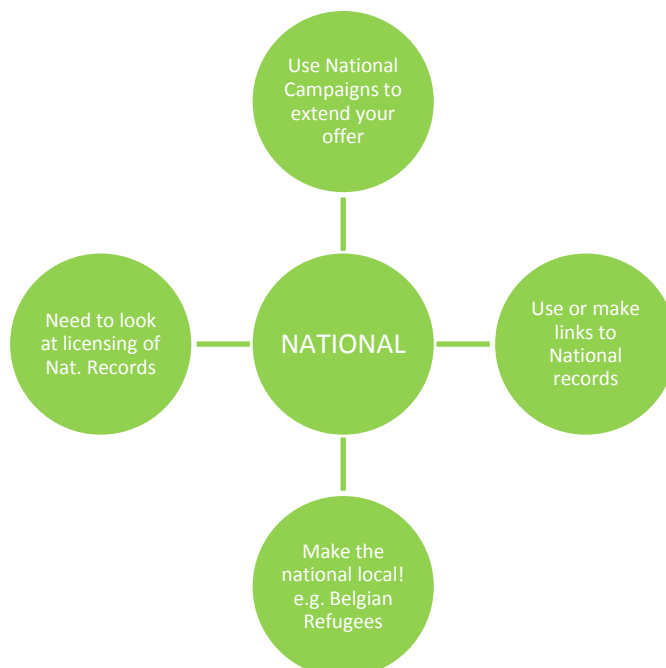
## LOCAL:



**But:** community groups – many of these approach you, better to be prepared and know who you want to work with so you have a rational if you have to say no!

- THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX
- HLF sometime point small projects towards you and they expect help – need to have a plan so can say only if you have allocated some money for that!

## NATIONAL:



## INTERNATIONAL:



## CORPORATE / INTERNAL:



## WHAT?

- Projects may need to be finite – hard to manage longer term activity if resource is project dependant
- One legacy can be increased access to the material
- Managing expectations – need to focus on one thing – you can't do/be involved in everything!
- Evaluation models for partnerships would be a useful thing to share

## WHY FWW?

- FWW offers so many angles and opportunities
- There is a wealth of records
- Partnerships can offer a mix of experiences and collections
- This is a unique opportunity to reach new audiences and get people engaged across the local/national/international level
- There has been a power shift – people want to engage with this material
- Unique subject matter – the impact was wide spread - all types of groups/communities have a connection
- The sources are mostly quite accessible, there is lots of it, and the stories are accessible
- Strong links to today's issues
- FWW is part of the national psyche
- People want to know, was most reported war, lots of interest, lots of rumours in public eye can be busted or confirmed
- Part of the national mythology
- Can challenge traditional idea e.g. Blackadder history
- New perspectives brought out by the records
- Can help people to feel like part of their area or community – pulls in different groups (non-family historians)
- Promotes Record Office as hub for activity – legacy of joint working within the community
- Will give people who organise the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary a good basis in the history!
- Allows different perspectives on the same material, different groups and backgrounds (less separatist)

## WHY NOT?

- Prepare for failure: some people don't do what they say they will do!
- Don't chase the money/opportunity if it is not appropriate for your organisation (risk assessment)

## **BEYOND THE COMMEMORATION**

### **PLAN FOR THE FUTURE BEFORE YOU START**

EVALUATION IS KEY: use this learning to inform the next phase of planning

Legacy:

- What NEW things will FWW help you achieve?
- How do you sustain these new ways of working after FWW commemoration?

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- Need to find channels to reach into new networks for new types of partnerships
  - Easier to build across one's own sector, e.g. public sector
  - Museums
  - FWW powerful subject to pull partners together

### **Partnerships**

- Develop follow on programmes to keep partnerships alive
- What went well and could it be built on: honest evaluation
- Looking at how dispersed collections can tell a single story
- Universities are open to partnerships – especially to connect with communities (REF agenda)

### **WW2**

- Follow-on topic: start planning now
- Build on lessons learned and new ways of working from FWW
- Think about collecting policies
- Oral history work now – 100 years is too late

### **Education**

- Train the trainer: give skills and enthusiasm to teachers and schools so they start to make regular visits and use of the archive
- Create learning resources for use after the project
- Evaluation essential to improve future work and to demonstrate impact
- Longitudinal evaluation may be needed
- Can tap into parent and family networks via school children: return visits with family at weekend, invite families to launch and celebration events

- Demonstrate the value of cultural and heritage partnerships to deliver social impacts
- Can be challenging to build partnerships with these types of bodies – as they have a different focus. Identify how you can help them and make a unique contribution

### **Community reach and social outcomes**

- Tap into community and personal collections
- E.g. adverts in local press, community events
- House clearance people (Bin man story!)
- Keep in touch with people – e.g. on mailing list for newsletter, events etc.
  
- Digitised archives
- Project content
- Learning resources
- Oral history material
- Films and new commissions
- Content by others: e.g. BBC programmes and continued access via iplayer?

### **Digital content**

- Capacity to create and preserve digital content
- Long term preservation and access
- Crowd sourcing
  - Flexible and accessible for volunteers
  - Can create “power users”
  - Can be done cheaply, e.g. using flickr
  - Well tested ways to e.g. do transcription and tagging now, and to ensure quality and consistency
  
- Improved capacity for archives to recruit and manage volunteers
- Recruitment from a wider pool and more tailored offers
- Recruit via website, council volunteer portal, community volunteer services
- Crowd sourcing volunteers: recruitment, quality control
- Partnership with U3A and their large volunteer pool
- Share expertise and bring expert organisations together in new ways

### **Volunteers**

- FWW is a magnet for volunteers: right project at the right time
- Active involvement e.g. conservation, listing, research, digitisation, oral history
- An experience that is useful to them – e.g. builds new skills or things for their cv
- Can be a time limited experience with a role description, not necessarily on-going
- Create “super-volunteers” to manage and train others

### **Users**

- Use FWW as test-bed for new activities and experiences that can then be included in regular programmes
- E.g. Kew Gardens trailing wheelchair walks on a FWW theme

## **Projects into mainstream work**

- Follow projects to pick up immediately
- Project documentation for handover post-project
- Involve wide range of staff not just project individuals
- Develop new internal relationships, e.g. with marketing team
- Use evaluation to demonstrate benefits of the project and to secure further funding
- Involve senior managers and decision makers, e.g. invite them to events
- Showcase work to all staff and let them feel involved
- Use FWW as test bed for new approaches and to embed in ongoing work
- Keep a record of how we commemorate in 2014-18: for next projects and for FWW 200!  
E.g. Mass observation/blog type activity by staff; web capture

## **Themes for projects post 2018**

- Post-war impacts of FWW e.g.
  - Invalids
  - Women and work and family life
- Remembering the war: war memorials such as hospitals, history of remembrance
- Films, plays etc. made after FWW and how they reflect our changing attitudes
- Spanish flu
- Next big collective commemoration e.g. Suffrage

## Social media why and how

### What's your strategy – who are you trying to reach?

Reaching new users

Serendipity – interacting with archives by accident

People who didn't know they were interested in archives

People who are scared of (intimidated, turned off by) archives

People who wouldn't have a clue what an archive is, but can engage with our content

People in the Missed Middle – not our retired users, not children and young people we try to reach with in person events - engaging people throughout their lives

Remember need for quick response – no 20 day waiting times here

Also raising institutional profile – what's online, who is welcome

Basic uses – advertising, responding speedily – faster than communication depts. (see risks)

### What does success look like?

It might be fleeting

Might build a following

Might get them involved in real life

Connecting with the collections

Reaching new audiences – need stats to understand this

Managing their expectations – what can you provide if you get a thousand excited enquiries?

- *Important to decide this at the start!*

### How can we access stories?

Look at the personal and small scale: individuals, discoveries, letter, diaries, rolls of honour – make it personal not political – this reduces risks (below)

Avoid sensitivities – broad brush themes hard to convey on social media. Innovation, for example, could be telescoped into too 'happy' a story if badly handled in small space

Example stories: women who came into work, shell shock, treatment and life after war, plastic surgery

Plan ahead for key dates – big national ones (outbreak, 1 July 2016 etc.), possibly an Archives Day for stories? Make sure colleagues know your plans too.

Don't be afraid of quirkiness – UCL Grant Museum's Jar of Moles, Unimpressive Fossil Fish of the Month as examples!

Schedule stories in advance – if you're pushing out content from collections it's sometimes okay to be one-way even on social media. People don't expect to interact with a war diary, unlike a consultative feed. Managing resources while exposing collections – even though two-way interaction may be better.

### Opportunities and partnership

Find a story, tell it, storify it, share it again, link it to others and make connections

Retweet each other and get IWM, TNA, BL support to highlight other events

Internationalism

'Vintage' might be better for language enticing people in – less scary than 'archives'!

As part of identity

1914.org – use the partnership

Europeana 14-18 collection – use social media to highlight small parts of massive collections

Use #onthisday – generic hashtag more likely to be serendipitous

Also dedicated feeds/days/times – can use to restrict your input, manage your time, not over-resource one area

Schedule in advance – know your dates, opportunities



Get others involved – especially comms/marketing – let them know your plans  
Partnerships don't have to stop at WW1

### **Risks**

The danger of short messages going too far, being misinterpreted

Language a key in short, snappy, but very clear links

Limited tech support

Staff not trusted to use social media

Time and resource needed to maintain a social media account well – it's not just pushing out content, it's interaction

Comms departments as blockers – or as house style, so document quotations aren't welcome

Social media platforms keep on moving – a 5 year plan may be overtaken by events

## **Media Strategy for First World**

### **Objective:**

Achieve national/regional media coverage for your First World War programme including the release of digitised records, events, wider collection, and establish yourself as a major player in marking the centenary of the First World War.

### **International/National/regional media - what they are looking for:**

- What material being released tells us something different/gives alternative perspective of the First World War?
- Personal stories – the individuals which make up the units, specifically any moving / unusual accounts of fighting in the war that might challenge perceptions
- Unusual discoveries – whilst you will want to ensure the content of your records is portrayed in the right way, the media will always be interested in the more unusual / rare occurrences and stories..
- Visuals – a particular page of a document that is strong visually and that represents the nature of the documents – and any photos are brilliant as they will always carry a story.

### **Guidance for researching stories for media use:**

- **What is involved? Overview of what is contained – and specifically what can be seen visually – from the records being released?**
- **Any photos / unusual stories / occurrences / objects found in the records? i.e. dog tags, personal diaries, letters etc.**
- **Who is involved: Any famous individuals / notable servicemen in the records? Personal stories contained within the records? Any unsung heroes?**
- **Why would the public be interested? Any wider reflections/different perspectives that the record brings to light about the First World War? How does this help the public?**
- **When / what period does this cover – any key events /battles / actions of note? i.e. The first unit to fight on the Western Front, the last battle of the cavalry units who fought before move to tanks etc.**

## Unlocking your collections

### What have we got that we want to unlock?

There is an almost unlimited amount of material with potential in the context of FWW. Specific types of material found in archives of different types included:

- Letters and diaries (from the Front, and at home)
- Reminiscences of veterans (written and oral history)
- War Poetry and literary mss from the time
- Court and prison records relating to convictions for infraction of wartime regulations
- Photographs and films
- Wills and probate records
- Forces unit records, especially for territorial units
- Records of individuals who came back to the UK from jobs overseas in order to fight (like my grandfather)
- Posters and programmes
- Local newspapers
- Hospital records relating to treatment of war casualties (especially material concerning shellshock/mental health, plastic surgery, and venereal disease)
- Records of temporary VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) Hospitals (like "Downton Abbey")
- Church monuments and war memorials (one of the group was from St Pauls Cathedral)
- War tribunal records, where they survive
- Records of British prisoners in POW camps in Germany and records of internment of enemy aliens in the UK
- Civil Defence records (particularly in the SE of England)
- Business Archives (records of staff members who joined up or went into war factories and temporary female workers; continuing contact with employees in forces; impact of war on products produced e.g. BSA Ltd moving from bicycles and cars to armoured vehicles and tanks). Also noted possibility of using commemoration to encourage firms to deposit records.
- War Refugee Committee records
- Wartime Charity records
- Food Committee records
- Maps (of war zones and of training facilities at home)
- School log books and admission records
- Records of smallholdings (many local authorities bought landed estates that came onto the market after 1918 and carved them up into small farms which were let to returning soldiers, especially those with shellshock or disabilities)
- Estate records (like businesses, show employees going off to war; also impact of reduction in number of servants; and the carnage among the sons of the gentry)
- Church records (potential for statistical analysis of impact of war on age-at-marriage, illegitimacy rates etc.)

### What do we mean by unlocking?

- There is a ladder of potential activities.
- Cataloguing is crucial. Some potential for it to be part of projects, but most people seemed to think that they would only know enough about collections to use them as the basis for projects if they were already catalogued.

- Contextualisation and Interpretation. This was probably the key focus of discussions. It was felt that we could best 'liberate' archives by going beyond the traditional catalogue and providing additional material that allowed users to understand them in context. Context could be provided by staff or volunteers. This was in the spirit of the commemoration: not 'doing it' to people but allowing them to 'do it' for themselves, on the basis of the records. Could result in educational resources (for children and adults), toolkits and information packs, or new creative work (e.g. plays, performance of war poetry, readings from diaries and letters etc.)
- Online exhibitions
- Social media. Seen as a good way of combining elements of online exhibition with contextualisation.
- Can use web/social media presence to encourage people to tell us about the family history they uncover to add colour to the records.
- Digitisation programmes to unlock key resources. Can be combined with contextual materials, and with crowd-sourcing transcription or the supply of relevant background information about people, places and subjects.