

REFLECTIONS ON THE CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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REFLECTIONS ON THE CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: LEARNING AND LEGACIES FOR THE FUTURE

- AHRC funded project, tied to the five AHRC funded First World War Engagement Centres (2014-2019)
- Aims:
- To research the co-production of knowledge during the centenary
- To situate this within a wider examination of the cultural memory of the First World War at its centenary.
- Interviews; focus groups; reflective workshops; online survey; Mass Observation Directive; postcards at public events; self-reflection.

THE CENTENARY IN BRITAIN 2014-18

- 2014-18: many thousands of community-led events, artist installations, museum displays, state-led acts of commemoration and memorialization.
- David Cameron 'There is something about the First World War that makes it a fundamental part of our national consciousness. Put simply, this matters not just in our heads, but in our hearts; it has a very strong emotional connection. I feel it very deeply' (Imperial War Museum, 2012).

Jeremy Deller (I4-18NOW) *We're here because we're here*, 1 July 2016



BLACKADDER GOES FORTH (AGAIN)

- The 'affective power' of the war.
- Blackadder was a key site for 'left wing versions of the past designed to belittle Britain and its leaders' (Michael Gove, *Daily Mail* 2 January 2014)
- 'we believe it is important to remember that this was a war that was driven by big powers' competition for influence around the globe, and caused a degree of suffering all too clear in the statistical record of 16 million people dead and 20 million wounded.' (*No Glory*, 2014)



FAMILY MEMORY AND PUBLIC HISTORY

A particular cultural memory of the war was deeply embedded in both family history and in national commemorations.

The centenary largely focused on the tragedy of the Western Front

Local and community projects, many funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, uncovered different histories.



