

- a) **Harvest Home** – This event at Preston Park Museum last September marked the start of the Council's commemoration of World War One. The event included the opportunity for people to set poppy seeds in the newly developed orchard area. These will flower during the summer of 2014 providing a living memorial to the commencement of World War One – the poppy fields have now blossomed.
- b) **'World War I: Stockton and the wider war' Exhibition** at Preston Park Museum – The exhibition of paintings by artist Rob Perry is now confirmed. It depicts the Somme and Verdun battlefields as they appear today, alongside his personal account of painting in the trenches, and a range of historical information. The exhibition will run from mid-July 2014 to mid-November 2014.
- c) An opening event is being planned to be held at Preston Hall. This is proposed to involve Cleveland Police Band playing music from the period. The Museum will utilise the Esmee Fairbairn kitchen to provide a real flavour of the era. This opening event is being planned by Youth Services and the Young People involved a date is hoped to be set in August to celebrate the project and screen the film.

In 2015 the commemoration will continue with the period street undergoing a special makeover to take visitors back to 1915 with:

- army recruiting posters
 - newspapers reporting the events of the summer of 1915
 - the Police Station converted into a recruiting office
 - costumed 'interpreters' discussing the day to day issues of life in 1915, and trying to persuade visitors to enlist as new recruits.
- d) **Young Roots Heritage Lottery Bid (HLF)** for 13 to 25 year olds – Culture and Leisure Services and the Council's Youth Services were awarded £34,500 for their project to enable local young people to explore the events of World War 1, including links to this area and local collections.

This project continues with fortnightly meetings of the young participants who are working on producing a graphic novel, a film and an exhibition. All three will be displayed at Preston Hall Museum in conjunction with the Rob Perry exhibition from the summer of 2014.

As part of this process, the young people supported the very successful World War 1 information event held at Stockton Central Library on Saturday 26 October 2013 by creating large format collage posters which will be included in their own exhibition.

As the original HLF guidelines were relaxed to include funding for overseas visits, a second bid (£10,000) was successfully submitted for the purpose of organising visits to Belgian battlefields, following in the footsteps of the Fifth Battalion (Stockton) DLI, this will allow a group of young people to visit the battlefields to see where our local Battalion fought.

The Trip to Belgium will take place on the 18th August

Day 1	Day 2
Sanctuary Wood (Hill 62)	Loker convent St Antoine
Hill 60	Essex Farm cemetery and bunkers
Spanbroekmolen	50th division memorial Weiltge ne of Ypres not on the list
In Flanders Fields Museum Ypres	Tyne Cot Cemetery
Menin Gate last post	Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917

The above sites all have a connection to the 5th Battalion DLI (and by association through the 150th Brigade of the 50th Division the 4th Yorks. These were the two territorial units that many men from the Borough served in and were originally made up of men from this area.

- e) **Heritage Website** – The framework for the website is now in place and content is being researched and created for the launch of the resource in the spring of 2014. The website allows visitors to access stories linked to the heritage of the Borough through maps, historical themes and places; or by format such as photo images, videos and documents.

It is intended to develop a core of twenty stories for the launch of the website and further content will be added as an on-going basis through the implementation of a development action plan.

The initial work on the site will be undertaken by libraries and heritage staff who will write the text to be included in each story ready for uploading to the web.

The site will also allow members of the public and community groups to submit stories. These will be checked and moderated before they are included on the main site to ensure consistency of approach and accuracy.

The website is now live and new material is being added <http://heritage.stockton.gov.uk/>

- f) **Armed Forces Week (Monday 23 to Saturday 28 June 2014)** – Democratic Services is responsible for the planning, organisation and delivery of the local activities and displays during this week. The theme for the week will include a focus on the GWC 2014.

The activities will follow the pattern of previous years with a flag raising service by the Town Hall in Stockton High Street (Monday 23 June); the Mayor's Charity Duck Race to raise money for the regiments that have been awarded the Freedom of the Borough; and a big event in Stockton High Street supported by military services and civilian organisations.

In addition, the Tees Valley WW1 touring exhibition will be displayed in the Rediscover Stockton shop unit in Stockton High Street from 23rd June 2014 – 4th July 2014 following this it will be at the Yarm Remembers event 2/3 August before returning to the Borough for a run at Thornaby library in 2015

- g) **Remembrance Day (Sunday 9 November 2014)** – Remembrance Services across the Borough are organised by the Royal British Legion. As in previous years, Members will be identified to represent the Council at the various Remembrance Services across the Borough and will lay a wreath on behalf of Members, Officers and residents. The Mayor will attend the service at Stockton Parish Church and the Deputy will attend service and parade at Thornaby.

- h) **Community Participation** – John Beeley, Stockton's Heritage Development Officer, has continued to work with local groups. "Yarm 1914" have the most developed programme as yet, and have recently successfully bid to the HLF for £27,500 to fund their activities. They also took part in the Public Information Day in Stockton in October 2013. Another bid developed with the assistance of the Heritage officer to ACE has raised a further £14,500. The money will help fund a series of events and has allowed a full creative writing programme to be delivered to the Yarm primary schools. ACE money has allowed a glass poppy making project that will be open both to local senior schools and community groups. Each Poppy inspired by one of the fallen.

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A second public engagement day was held at Thornaby Central library during March 2014 with an associated visit to the Thornaby Youth Centre by the Time Bandits. This forms part of the Arts Council Strategic Fund project currently being delivered across the Tees Valley's Museums and Library Services. This has been completed.

The Heritage Officer has also met with Billingham residents to develop their community commemorations in the town. Through the Tees Valley Museums ACE WW1 fund we were able to provide re-enactors for their event held on the 18th July.

There will a national candlelit vigil at Westminster Abbey on 4 August 2014, exactly 100 years after WW1 started. Details are still to be finalised. This provides an opportunity for communities across the country to participate by organising local candlelit vigils. Discussions about this will take place with the incoming Mayor and Rev. Alan Farish from Stockton Parish Church. The Government hopes that churches, faith groups and community organisations across the country will organise their own will local vigil.

- i) Commemoration of those awarded the Victoria Cross** – This is one of the Government's centrepiece projects to mark the Great War Centenary to ensure that there is a permanent memorial to all the heroes who were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for gallantry – this country's highest wartime honour – during World War I.

The idea of a personalised monument in each hero's home town came from the individual tributes given to each gold medal winner at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, which saw the Royal Mail paint more than 100 of its red post boxes gold.

Over 400 communities across the United Kingdom will be provided with specially designed commemorative paving stones to be laid on the 100th anniversary of date that the medals were originally awarded. The first ceremonies will begin in August 2014 representing the date the first two VC's were awarded during the First World War, with further ceremonies to continue until 2018.

The winner of the competition to design the commemorative paving stone was recently announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The design has a circular emblem with the name of the recipient and their regiment. Each stone will incorporate an electronic reader which people will be able to scan on their smartphones to discover more information about their local Victoria Cross recipient.

Stockton will be provided with a paving stone in honour of our only WW1 recipient of the Victoria Cross – Sergeant Edward 'Ned' Cooper, who was awarded his medal 'For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack' during the battle of Passchendaele at Langemarck on 16 August 1917, whilst serving with the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

The DCLG are in the process of securing production of the stones and plan to get it delivered during this summer. It will be made from York stone, Scoutmoor, measuring 600mm x 600mm and will weigh roughly 45 kg.

They would like the Council to store the paving stone until it is needed (i.e. until the date of the 100th anniversary of the battle for which the VC was awarded thus ensuring that the laying of stones happens over the four year period). Based on the

DCLG guidance, the installation of the Commemorative Paving Stone should take place on the 100th anniversary of the award of the Victoria Cross, which would be August 2017.

The DCLG will cover the costs of production and delivery, but the Council would need to cover storage, laying the stone and maintaining it.

It is up to local councils to decide the specific location of the stone (in discussion with interested parties such as relatives where relevant), but the DCLG is encouraging councils to consider sites with relevance to the VC recipient. The Secretary of State is keen that people should just 'come across' the stones whilst going about their daily lives.

The Commemorative Working Group, at its meeting held on 24th January 2014, approved Sgt. Cooper's inclusion within the Stockton Hall of Fame, and having considered possible locations, supported its proposed siting within Stockton Town Centre.

The views of the family of Ned Cooper have been sought regarding a preferred location, and they too have expressed a preference for the commemorative stone to be laid in Stockton Town Centre, where he was 'most well known'.

There are already other strong links to the armed forces in the High Street such as the War Memorial with the Remembrance Day parade and service; the Remembrance Garden at the Parish Church; and the Armed Forces Week activities, which includes the flag raising ceremony next to the Town Hall. Considering the results of the consultation exercises and the existing links to the High Street, Cabinet are requested to approve the siting of the paving stone in an appropriate location within Stockton Town Centre.

- j) Regional World War One Commemoration Group** – Officers from Stockton Borough Council continue to meet with representatives of Museums, Libraries, Archives and local authorities from across the North East to discuss the wider commemoration of the Great War through community projects, regional groups and services.

The public World War One information event held at Stockton Central Library on Saturday October 26th proved very successful with around 700 people visiting throughout the day to view stalls and displays from local groups, museums, archives and heritage focused services. The "Time Bandits" provided local colour and costumed interpretation, whilst Mike McGrother and the Town Choir provided appropriate music to help commemorate all those lost in conflicts, but especially those lost during the First World War.

A second, similar, event in the Borough is being developed for Thornaby Central Library which was carried out in March 2014.

A further Regional event will be held at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle later in the spring.

- k) Arts Council Strategic Fund Bid** – The successful bid has enabled the Tees Valley's Museums to take forward their Commemoration Project, despite changes to staffing which have offered significant challenges.

A Steering Group of representatives from each of the five local authorities is directing the work of two working groups that are continuing to meet regularly to further the work of the project, namely: -

The Learning, Exhibitions and Collections Group – this group is now chaired by Stocktons Collection officer Christine Hutchinson who is now in post.

The Exhibition is in the process of being designed following the appointment of Janvs, a company with an international reputation. The Exhibition will consist of three stand- alone pods each individually modelled to represent scenes from the War. Each pod will have a number of interpretive panels which will pass on information about the war with a Tees Valley perspective. There will be a preview of the exhibition at Preston Hall during May 2014. This has now been held.

The Outreach and Performance Group – Periplum has been appointed to deliver the performance element of the project and in Stockton the event will take place on 27 September 2014. Local stories have been passed onto the Project Officers and these will be used to develop a script for the show. This project is now under full development by the performance company Periplum

- l) Digital Tapestry** – The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) proposed a national ‘arts-related’ online war memorial, comprising work from local communities. A variety of media forms could be used from performances being filmed and uploaded onto the internet, to art work created by local communities being digitized for inclusion.

The SCL has now submitted their bid to the Arts Council for this work which would feature contributions from ten library services across the country, including Stockton, North Tyneside and Newcastle in the North East region.

The £100,000+ bid would provide funding for the ten individual library-based projects as well as the development of an online platform to upload locally created work from each area of the country. A decision about the bid is expected this month, and if successful, work will begin almost immediately. The intention is to spread the opportunity out to other library services across England if the bid is successful and the first stage goes to plan.

Stockton’s proposed contribution is for a contemporary musical reflection on the war. Interlinked with spoken word from original texts of the period, a musical soundscape would be produced that would then be placed on the digital war memorial. It would bring a new audience into the library, and give them an insight and understanding of the impact the war had on this area and its people. The words would be recited by performing art students from Stockton Riverside College and local theatre schools. This has now been successfully carried out and elements are now live on history pin

www.historypin.com

- m) War Graves Plaques** – This initiative by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) aims to raise public awareness about the existence of war graves in their local cemeteries. This initiative has involved the installation of small plaques at the entrance of Durham Road, Oxbridge Lane and Thornaby cemeteries in the Borough all of which have war graves.
- n) Sunflower Project** - Sunflower Remembrance Project – The Council and key partners delivered a high profile Borough wide event, that offered all of our communities the opportunity to be involved in the planting of sunflowers in memory of

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the 1,245 people from Stockton that went away to fight for their country in WW1 and never returned. The sunflower seeds were distributed in Spring 2014 and each one was accompanied by a name of one of Stockton's fallen of 1914. Individuals, families, schools and businesses from across the Borough were invited to take a seed or number of seeds and, as well as tending for the growing plant there was the option of researching the life of their named person. Stories were gathered and a reflection on their lives formed some of the content of a commemorative community event in Parish Gardens, Stockton from 2nd – 5th of August. Including a 1,245 minute vigil that commenced the on 4th August, the day that Britain entered the war. During the period 2nd – 5th of August the sunflowers were 'cut down' many, significantly before they are fully grown, to represent the fact that members of our community were cut down before they reached their prime as a result of the Great War. The sunflowers were displayed around the War Memorial, within Parish Gardens and at the graves of those buried in the town. The commemoration finished with a moving ceremony on 5th August at the end of the 1,245 minute vigil where the community came together to remember the Fallen of Stockton.