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Larissa [Allwork](#) 

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'Sedimented histories' and 'embodied legacies': Creating an evaluative framework for understanding public engagement with the First World War

Larissa Allwork* – *University of Derby, UK*

Abstract

This article reflects on the development of a new methodological framework for the evaluation of the impact of the Centre for Hidden Histories, one of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's First World War Engagement Centres. It shows how through evaluative processes such as academic and community partner Shared Experience Workshops, and community-focused Reflection Workshops, the historical, social, cultural and economic benefits of the centre can be highlighted. It also demonstrates how public engagement in these community history projects has resulted in the identification of new 'embodied legacies' (Facer and Enright, 2016) and heretofore marginalized 'sedimented histories' (Lloyd and Moore, 2015). These lessons in evaluation can be taken forward to inform future national commemorative moments, such as the centenary of the Second World War.

Keywords: Centre for Hidden Histories, impact, First World War, 'sedimented histories', 'embodied legacies'

Key messages

- The benefits of the Centre for Hidden Histories included its promotion of public engagement with marginalized histories of the First World War. Community participants also positively described skills acquisition and other social benefits.
- Analysis of the evaluative feedback suggests four types of community participation in Centre for Hidden Histories projects: (1) transformers; (2) retired professionals; (3) connectors; and (4) grassroots participants.
- Evaluative methods developed for the Centre for Hidden Histories could be replicated by future historical commemorative programmes defined by academic–community partnership working.

Introduction

This article will present the methodologies developed by the Centre for Hidden Histories (CHH) team to evaluate the public benefits of the centre's work. It will then discuss the findings of this evaluative framework. The CHH was established by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as one of the five UK First World War Engagement Centres. It was set up to engage with communities previously or actively

alienated from British First World War commemorations, and to stimulate their interest, provide training and promote collaborations between university academics, community groups and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF; from 2019, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, NLHF). This was specifically in terms of providing guidance and support to grantees in relation to the HLF funding scheme, *First World War: Then and Now* (Beckett *et al.*, 2016). The HLF was established in 1994 to distribute a proportion of National Lottery funding to heritage projects and organizations across the UK.

Throughout these collaborations, there was a focus on the significance of ‘co-productive’ methodology. Co-productive investigation is research that is collectively produced in a spirit of egalitarianism by academics, practitioners and the public for shared mutual benefit. However, the use of co-productive methodology to create a broad base of ‘citizen historians’ within the context of the First World War centenary has not been without its critics. Some professional historians have articulated concerns about the quality of texts being produced, as well as the de-professionalization of the discipline into a leisure activity (Ridge, cited in Lilley, 2018: 118). The CHH sought to maintain the research rigour of the university–community collaborations that it supported through its academic peer review of applications for funding.

Between 2014 and 2016, the CHH supported 17 collaborative projects between university academics and community partners. These were called Research Development Fund (RDF) projects, and a further 6 were funded from 2017. Partners supported by the CHH RDF between 2014 and 2016 included: the University of Derby and community visual arts company, Spiral Arts; Oxford Brookes University and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum; Nottingham Trent University and Pomegranate Youth Theatre; Middlesex University and Eastside Community Heritage; Leicester De Montfort University and the Knockaloe and Patrick Visitor Centre, Isle of Man; UCL and community film-making company ReelMcR. In addition, the centre’s Community Challenge Fund (CCF) supported more than 20 small-scale community-led initiatives such as symposia and workshops, day trips to archives and schools projects.

The first set of evaluative findings discussed in this article will focus on the presentations delivered by academic and community partners at a CHH Shared Experience Workshop. The analysis presented will suggest how CHH projects engaged members of the public in uncovering what Sarah Lloyd and Julie Moore (2015) have called ‘sedimented histories’ of the First World War. These ‘sedimented histories’ are:

Where voices and memories are contested or perspectives fragmented, where elements of the past are differently weighted or valued ... [creating] a ‘sediment’ of connected, but not necessarily uniform histories: rather like Raphael Samuel’s view of the built environment as ‘a sediment of geological strata, a multi-layered reality’, sedimented histories are available over time, adjacent to one another, but not thrust into a competition for survival of the historically fittest. (*ibid.*: 242)

Thus, within the context of the CHH, ‘sedimented histories’ can be viewed as local and regional co-produced histories of the First World War that coexist with, but that also profoundly challenge, mainstream representations of ‘Tommyes in trenches’. This is through presenting alternative or less well-known First World War narratives, such as the role of troops from the British Empire, the experiences of refugees from Europe, and British policies relating to the internment of ‘enemy aliens’. Uncovering these ‘sedimented histories’ is important in public engagement contexts because there have

been profound experiences of inequality within Britain's wartime and post-war military, political and commemorative frameworks.

These exclusions in relation to what First World War pasts have been publicly archived, written about and collectively memorialized are sometimes because more marginalized or excluded narratives correspond with 'difficult histories'. Professor of Journalism and Communications, and CHH academic partner, Jane Chapman has described 'difficult histories' as encompassing a range of issues. They might be 'difficult histories' to investigate because the archives underpinning them might be incomplete and/or difficult to access. Alternatively, these 'difficult histories' could relate to the stories of minority, marginal or persecuted individuals and groups, rather than representing the grand narratives of the majority. A widely debated term, the understanding of 'minority' used here is less about the size of a collective, and more about a community group's access to rights, representation and power. Finally, 'difficult histories' might be harder for mainstream audiences to enjoy because they sometimes relate to painful, shameful or regrettable moments in a nation's or community's shared past (Chapman, 2018, 2019).

The second set of evaluative findings analysed here will explore the role of Reflection Workshops in providing a mechanism for identifying typologies of engagement while simultaneously stimulating discussion of what Keri Facer and Bryony Enright (2016) might call the 'embodied legacies' of the CHH's First World War engagement. For Facer and Enright (2016: 6), these 'embodied legacies' represent for individuals and communities the 'most significant and sustainable legacies ... Participants in projects are developing new skills, knowledge and understanding'. These 'embodied legacies' are significant because, as Laura King and Gary Rivett (2015: 227) have noted, the value of community history projects 'cannot be divorced from the engagement itself, whose value often lies in ... [the] process, the relationships and the collaboration rather than the end change'.

Methodology

While the CHH used conventional modes of data gathering such as questionnaires and feedback forms to collate opinions on the success and limitations of its outreach work, it also developed two bespoke mechanisms to evaluate the benefits of the centre's work: the academic–community partner-focused Shared Experience Workshop and the more community-based Reflection Workshop. Templates and questions for these sessions were developed by the Impact Fellow (Allwork), in discussion with and under the peer review of CHH Principal Investigator (Professor John Beckett) and Community Liaison Officer (Michael Noble) in the summer of 2016. Noble has more extensively reflected on his role at the CHH in his *Research for All* co-authored article, 'The emergence of the publicly engaged research manager' (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2019).

Both Shared Experience Workshops and Reflection Workshops were designed with ethical considerations in mind and a self-reflexive awareness of the risks involved, specifically in relation to university engagement with minority group community participants. One of the first key risks for the CHH team was the potential biases and conflicts of interest arising from the fact that the Impact Fellow was an 'embedded researcher', and therefore both a participant in and evaluator of the CHH. To mitigate bias, questions for CHH participants were designed to be as open as possible, and Shared Experience Workshop and Reflection Workshop participants were actively encouraged to give honest and critical feedback about the CHH. Also, while strongly encouraged, attendance at Shared Experience Workshops and Reflection Workshops

was not mandatory. As a result, it should be noted that our findings are often based on the views of those individuals who saw value in the reflection process because of the success of their project or because it satisfied other institutional needs (for example, collation of data for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 and HLF evaluation requirements). Sometimes more resistance was met in collecting verbal and numeric feedback from less successful projects, or initiatives where the project leaders had delivered but were constrained from giving feedback by other time commitments in academia, business or the culture industries.

A second risk that has been outlined by Facer and Enright (2016: 159) was the hierarchies of power ascribed to the stereotypical image of a Russell Group university such as Nottingham, and how this might have an impact on the inclination of community representatives to participate in the evaluation process. To combat this potential for perceived cultural power asymmetries, the CHH engaged with a range of universities (Russell Group, post-1992). The team also held Shared Experience Workshops and Reflection Workshops at community venues in spaces not traditionally associated with universities. These included the Riverside Centre, Derby (Shared Experience Workshop, 19 September 2016); Edin's Café, Nottingham (Reflection Workshop, 25 August 2016) and Birmingham Library (Reflection Workshop, 24 April 2017). In addition, some of the projects commissioned by the CHH took additional measures to mitigate these potential cultural power asymmetries. For example, the COREL project (Curating Online Resources for Engagement and Learning), led by Dr Nick Baron (University of Nottingham), worked with heritage and arts consultancy company Culture Syndicates in the organization of community partner focus groups. For Baron, agencies such as Culture Syndicates are important in helping find that 'common language' and mutual ground of shared interest that is essential for effective university and community collaboration. In short, companies such as Culture Syndicates can advise academics as to how best to communicate with community partners, while they can also help community partners to be confident in articulating their views to academics (Baron in Allwork, 2017e).

A third risk was that CHH conveners would not empathize enough with specific diasporic cultures of collective memory, in which participants might have their own reasons for alienation from dominant UK narratives of the First World War promoted by politicians and national institutions, or may have social traditions of remembrance, mourning, trauma or grief that are profoundly different from dominant UK norms and narratives. Sensitizing the CHH team to contemporary controversies in First World War remembrance politics, particularly in relation to Commonwealth and minority communities, thus became a key part of undertaking these evaluative projects. For example, on starting her role at the CHH, Allwork, who had dealt with some of these theoretical issues as part of her involvement in an academic symposium, 'Decolonizing trauma studies' (Craps *et al.*, 2015), was given an overview of CHH community partners by Noble. His overview was based on the preparatory relationship building that he had conducted in the first year of the centenary. During this year, Noble built trust with groups and listened to the needs and expectations of community partners. There is relatively little in the current academic literature that interrogates this important exploratory, preparatory phase. For Noble, a key lesson was that projects based on university and community partnerships need to build time into their project plans for this key learning and partnership-building period.

Noble's overview to Allwork included verbal briefings on the specific challenges posed by engagement with different UK diaspora communities in relation to the history of the First World War. Topics addressed in Noble's briefings included the

fact that the CHH found particular success with engaging with long-established and well-networked Sikh and South Asian Muslim communities (chiefly through the work of the University of Nottingham's Professor Mike Heffernan), and also developed good relationships with African and African diaspora communities (supported by CHH consultant researcher, Emeritus Professor David Killingray). However, recognizing that the impact of the First World War on the Middle East is a topic of particular contemporary importance, Noble had also made it a long-term goal to cultivate links with less well-established and networked community groups in the UK, such as Kurds from Turkey, Syria and Iraq. The CHH used several methods for building trust in these communities and for breaking down barriers to engagement. These included the investment of time and patience in the building of these relationships, as well as the use of third-party mediators, such as the Red Cross and community arts company Excavate. The primary result of these efforts was Excavate's play, *In Flux* (2017), a performative engagement with the First World War, the Middle East and its echoes for the contemporary refugee crisis.

Both Shared Experience Workshops and Reflection Workshops were recorded in order to build up a CHH Reflections Archive. All the recordings were made with the knowledge of participants and were underpinned by the ethics of informed consent (Raleigh Yow, 1994). Thus, in line with the 'participatory turn' in knowledge highlighted by Facer and Enright (2016: 11), discussions in Shared Experience Workshops and Reflection Workshops were facilitated and recorded in order to capture dialogues that allow best practice guidelines in academic–community collaborations to arise from the grassroots (Allwork, 2016b). These recordings also provide evidence of the benefits of the CHH for various funding bodies, as well as demonstrating the 'sedimented histories' and 'embodied legacies' of CHH projects.

Engaging the public in 'sedimented histories'

Box 1: The Shared Experience Workshop

The one-day Shared Experience Workshop was divided into a morning and an afternoon session. The first half of the day required academics and their community partners to give a 15-minute presentation on the impact of their research project. Participants were encouraged, but did not have, to use specifically designed PowerPoint slides that asked for an introduction to the academic partner's contribution to the project and an introduction to the community partner's contribution to the project, followed by three examples of the main benefits/beneficiaries of the project (accompanied where possible with a piece of quantitative, qualitative and/or photographic evidence). Then there was a slide for a summary of outcomes and, finally, a slide for personal reflections.

When used, this PowerPoint allowed CHH staff to see evidence of the benefits of projects, and it also acted as a self-assessment tool for academics and community partners to monitor the progress of the impact of their projects. This was because it identified the existing evidence for the impact claimed, but also showed areas where the project could be more clearly linked to its associated research, as well as offering space for reflection on how its benefits for communities could be further developed. In this way, it was a particularly useful preparatory tool for the draft writing of Impact Case Studies for the Research Excellence Framework (REF). This is a peer-review-based audit of UK research by the four UK higher education funding bodies, which is next held in 2021.

By contrast, the afternoon session was more focused on semi-structured discussion and the exchange of experience and best practice in university–community partnership working based on the key HLF themes of heritage, people and communities. Participants were split into four groups of three or four people each. All groups contained representatives of both universities and communities. Each group was then allocated a theme to discuss for 20 minutes, which was then further structured by a series of questions in relation to that theme. Themes for discussion included: ‘Collaborations and partnerships’; ‘Communities, education and skills’; ‘First World War history and heritage’; and ‘First World War and public engagement’. At the end of the 20-minute session, each group was asked to present to the Shared Experience Workshop on their theme, which was then opened up to the floor for wider discussion. The Shared Experience Workshop ended with a short plenary discussion on the legacies of academic–university partnership projects.

Full details of the exact questions used in the afternoon session of the Shared Experience Workshop can be found in a CHH working paper published on the AHRC Connected Communities website (Allwork, 2016b). This paper also includes a summary of CHH Shared Experience Workshop recommendations for best practice in university and community collaborations in relation to arts and humanities research. The Shared Experience Workshop model can be tailored and adjusted to assist in the evaluation of other academic–community partnership projects in relation to cultural heritage.

The presentations delivered in the morning session of the Shared Experience Workshop (see Box 1) at Derby Riverside Centre (19 September 2016) confirmed that an important cumulative public engagement impact of these projects was to uncover and reconnect what in Lloyd and Moore’s (2015) words can be described as collectively and co-produced ‘sedimented histories’ of the First World War. What emerged as significant from many of these delegate presentations was that these historical analyses of the experience of minorities during the First World War also often provoked profound reflections about politics in the present – whether in terms of the consideration of diversity in UK schools, the Syrian refugee crisis or reflections on UK immigration debates within the context of Brexit. Three of the eight projects presented at the Shared Experience Workshop will be focused on here, as they are particularly relevant in showing how the process of uncovering and confronting ‘sedimented histories’ of the First World War became profoundly intertwined with contemporary politics in the eyes of their project leaders and community partners. It is also important to note how all of these projects, although often UK-focused and regional in implementation, were also often translocal and strongly interconnected with the globality of the First World War conflict. Furthermore, it would be positive if their legacies could be further internationalized. Potential precedents for this include the global collaborations fostered by 14–18 NOW and the London Transport Museum’s restored ‘battle bus’ tours in Belgium and France (House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019: 10), as well as Professor Michael Roper’s HLF/Everyday Lives in War collaboration with Age UK, ‘Meeting in No Man’s Land’ (2016). This challenging but emotionally rewarding project brought together British and German descendants of people who had served in the First World War to share their family histories, memories and understandings of the war and its legacies (Duffett and Roper, 2018; Roper and Duffett, 2018).

The first ‘sedimented history’ uncovered concerned the contribution made by Britain’s domestic diaspora populations to the conflict, as well as that by the British Empire’s colonies and dominions. During the war, there was differentiation in the

treatment of colonial military personnel based on their so-called 'race'. Anzac and Canadian troops who served on the Western Front were encouraged to fraternize with UK civilian society, but for Indian infantrymen drafted to fight on the Western Front, their presence in England was accompanied by civilian restrictions and anxieties surrounding their sexual relationships with British women. Even more hierarchical was the treatment of Africans, who were permitted to fight as soldiers in their native continent, but were expected to serve in labour battalions on the Western Front (Morrow, 2014: 413–14).

Moreover, in his recent scholarship on London, John Sibbon (2016: 299) has argued that in the aftermath of the First World War:

in the landscape of the symbolic centre of the former imperial metropole, officials deliberately constructed a memory of the war as a 'white man's war', fought with the assistance of loyal Asians, with the service of Africans and Caribbeans expressly excluded.

To evidence his claims, Sibbon points to examples such as Whitehall's official 'silence' over the 1919 race riots, the exclusion of Black colonial troops from the 1919 peace celebrations and the omission of Britain's Caribbean colonies and African colonies from visual representation in the 'Million Dead of the British Empire' memorial tablet, which was unveiled in Westminster Abbey in 1926 (ibid.: 305–6).

It was against this backdrop of the profound challenges posed by the representation of minority groups within the post-1918 legacies of First World War commemorations that Kurt Barling (Middlesex University) and Judith Garfield (Eastside Community Heritage) put together their project, *Hidden Heroes of Empire – Black Soldiers in the Middlesex Regiment*. Barling and Garfield used holdings at the National Archives in Kew and the National Army Museum to reveal the contribution of soldiers from the Empire to the Middlesex Regiment. Influenced by the research of Killingray (1986), Richard Smith (2004) and Stephen Bourne (2014), the results of Barling and Garfield's project included a short documentary film. Media and film students from Middlesex University worked with Barling to create the 16-minute documentary, *Hidden Heroes: Soldiers from the Empire* (Middlesex University, 2016). This introduced the life stories of four largely unknown soldiers from the British Empire and its allies who served in the Middlesex Regiment in the First World War. The film chronicles the lives of Harry Ohara from Japan (1891–1950), Kamal Chunchie from Ceylon (Sri Lanka, 1896–1953), Agit Anil Rudra from India (1896–1993) and Sam Manning from Trinidad (1897–1960).

Barling and Garfield's project also resulted in a static exhibition at Bruce Castle Museum, Tottenham (2015–16) and a pop-up exhibition tour of secondary schools in the Greater London area. Illustrating the reach of the pop-up, over four hundred teachers and students were surveyed by Barling and Garfield in relation to their responses to the exhibition. Secondary school students were also encouraged by some teachers to use artefacts and games to introduce primary school students to the pop-up exhibition. MP for Tottenham, David Lammy, and MP for Enfield, Joan Ryan, also visited the exhibition in schools. Following the opening of the *Soldiers of Empire* exhibition at Bruce Castle Museum, and the appearance of the pop-up at a London comprehensive, David Lammy MP invited Barling to a meeting with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to talk about culture and diversity. Of the significance of this experience for the CHH, Barling noted:

We can play at the top table if we get the right connections. And I suspect that the Minister was actually quite open to the idea that if you want to

deal with social cohesion, if you want to deal with diversity, if you want to make our cultural outputs inclusive, you can't ignore these stories. (Barling in Allwork, 2016b: 12)

The second 'sedimented history' with particularly strong resonances for contemporary politics explored by Shared Experience Workshop participants was the experiences of refugees during the 1914–18 conflict. For example, fleeing the brutalities of German occupation (Horne, 2014: 569), approximately 250,000 Belgians came to the UK, and some of these refugees resided in Cheshire (Lowe, 2016). The history of these refugees has often been overlooked, in part because most of these refugees returned to Belgium following a rapid post-war repatriation process instigated by the UK government (Ewence, 2017: 89–113). The project about Belgian refugees in Cheshire, led by Dr Hannah Ewence (University of Chester), in collaboration with the St Werburgh's Parish Great War Study Group, has increased public consciousness of the historical experiences of this group through a combination of local heritage initiatives and alliances with associated community projects. While investigating the history of their local war memorial, parishioners uncovered the history of Belgian refugees who had lived in the area and prayed at St Werburgh's during the war. In response to this history, the St Werburgh's Parish Great War Study Group created a community exhibition in their church in November 2015, which explored the history of these refugees (Ewence and Grady, 2017: 6–7).

Belgian refugee histories uncovered by Ewence's project were also integrated into a Diverse Narratives touring exhibition (June 2016), led by the University of Chester and funded by HLF, which was also discussed as part of the project's Shared Experience Workshop presentation. This exhibition appeared in various Cheshire public spaces, including market squares and shopping centres. Over six hundred people have seen the exhibition. Demonstrating the contemporary relevance of this project, one visitor commented:

Why is this type of history generally not taught at school? It seems really important to help us and our children understand all the diversity in Britain today. The exhibition has changed the way I think about the First World War. (Visitor quoted in Allwork, 2016a: 4)

Indeed, at the Shared Experience Workshop, Ann Marie Curtis, a representative of St Werburgh's Parish Great War Study Group, commented on the relevance of the Belgian refugee project for debates about the current European refugee crisis since 2015. This crisis had been precipitated by the displacement of people from conflicts in countries such as Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan and North Africa:

How many people would have envisaged the number of refugees that we have coming into this country. My particular group was concentrating on Belgian refugees, and the similarities between them coming in at Folkestone and the people coming in from Calais is just absolutely amazing. There are certainly echoes there. (Curtis in Allwork, 2016b: 12)

The third theme with strong resonances for the present explored by participants in the Shared Experience Workshop related to the experiences of German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish nationals living in the UK, and the British government's internment of so-called 'enemy aliens' during the First World War as a result of the Aliens Restriction Act (5 August 1914). The purpose of this Act was to control the entry, residence, movement and departure of 'enemy' groups, who had to register their identity at police stations during the conflict. The Aliens Restriction

Act resulted in further legislation authorizing the arrest, internment and deportation of male members of these groups suspected of posing a threat (Panayi, 1993: 56–7). Following the Lusitania riots in May 1915, the UK government hit a peak of internment in November 1915. By this time, 32,440 men were interned in British camps such as Stratford and Alexandra Palace in London, Handforth in Cheshire, Lofthouse Park near Wakefield, Stobs in Scotland and Knockaloe on the Isle of Man (Panayi, 2014a: 732; Panayi, 2014b: 100). After the war, there were also large-scale forced repatriations. As late as the early 1990s, Tony Kushner and David Cesarani (1993: 1) described Britain's twentieth-century history of internment as 'a hidden feature of British history' at the level of popular consciousness.

The Shared Experience Workshop featured five projects exploring the history of 'enemy aliens' and internment. These included projects that chronicled the experience of Germans in the East Midlands (Braber *et al.*, 2016; Braber, 2017; Amos, 2017) and a project about Handforth Internment Camp (Dr Tim Grady and Handforth Parish Council), as well as Professor Panikos Panayi and community partner Alison Jones's major project constructing a memorial centre and internee database at the former Knockaloe internment camp in Patrick village, Isle of Man, which opened on 10 May 2019. Reflecting on the, until recent, paucity of institutional memorialization of Knockaloe's history as an internment site, Panayi (2014a: 738) perceptively (although, given the extremity of the violence in the Nazi camps, not uncontentiously) commented:

This lack of a memorial is the best indication of the amnesia towards internment in FWW [First World War] Britain. While the Federal Republic [of Germany] maintains memorials on the sites of countless Nazi concentration camps, Britain can only spare a small plaque.

However, it was Dr Claudia Sternberg (University of Leeds) and independent historian David Stowe's research into the cross-cultural histories of internment with the *In the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time* project that most coalesced with the politics of the present, in particular British attitudes towards Europe and inner-European migration brought into public focus by the UK EU Referendum (June 2016). *In the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time* was designed as a comparative, bilingual and translocal engagement with German and Austrian civilians interned at Lofthouse Park Camp in Britain and British internees held at Ruhleben Camp in Germany. At the Shared Experience Workshop, Sternberg and Stowe discussed their Lofthouse Park Heritage Open Day 2016, which they had organized as a speculative event rather than one built on existing community links. This featured on BBC Radio Leeds and attracted about eighty visitors, including local residents, descendants and representatives of the wider project from Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, Kent and Berlin. The success of this event led to a second Heritage Open Day in 2017, which involved further British and German participants. The open days offered a guided tour of the former internment site led by Stowe, as well as talks by descendant Corinna Meiß and by Karl-Heinz Wüstner about the German pork butcher families of Yorkshire. They showcased materials from private and public archives, and also featured short performances by Joe Williams and Kate Vigurs, who gave a fictionalized voice to a Jamaican internee held at Ruhleben and the English wife of a German professor interned at Lofthouse Park respectively. The second Heritage Open Day additionally marked the launch of an illustrated map of the internment site (Allwork, 2017d).

The production of this map is particularly important as the site of Lofthouse Park has all but vanished into a landscape of housing estates and grassland. In October 1918, civilian internees were sent to the Isle of Man, and Lofthouse Park became a

military prisoner-of-war camp until 1920 (Stowe, 2018a: 28–9). After this time, the camp was dismantled, and its fixtures and fittings auctioned, while its iconic pavilion building was razed by fire on 22 April 1922 (Stowe, 2018b: 208). The importance of the 2017 Heritage Open Day in revealing this hidden history of the topography of the camp was noted by a number of participants. One person commented: 'A complete revelation. I have lived within 6 miles for 60 years and knew nothing!' Another added: 'Fascinating insight to a part of local history that I never knew about' (event participants quoted in Allwork, 2017d).

The amnesia about internment demonstrated at Lofthouse Park provides a microcosm of broader issues within the UK public sphere in relation to knowledge, understanding and informed public debate around Britain's modern history of immigration, emigration and the treatment of minority communities. For, as Dr Eva Göbel, Sternberg and Stowe's research partner based at Humboldt University of Berlin, summarized it:

There are many stories that can be told about World War I. The most frequent story told here in Britain and also in Germany is that of battles, trenches and soldiers and women who supported the war as nurses and workers. But there are other stories, too. Knowing that migration is not only a phenomenon of our time the question arises what happened to the Germans in Britain and the British in Germany during WWI? And then it is only a small step to ask how do we treat 'aliens'? Is there a general suspicion of certain communities and where is it all leading? That's why events like the Lofthouse Heritage Open Day are so important. (Göbel, quoted in Allwork, 2017d)

Indeed, Sternberg and Stowe noted the contemporary relevance of their project in the introduction to their edited collection on the history of Lofthouse Park, which was first presented in 2018 alongside a historical exhibition at Wakefield Central Library – a partnership that had also evolved from the first open day:

The dangers of presentism and sweeping comparisons notwithstanding, it is pertinent to take the long view on British German relations and European mobility at the present time. The official commemorations of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 2016 and the EU Referendum on 23 June 2016 lay only seven days apart ... The new European other, or 'EU migrant', has not only been framed in Britain within the language of mass immigration, but also triggered the reappearance of terms like 'registration' and 'deportation' in the press. When Prime Minister Theresa May singled out the 'citizen of nowhere' at the Conservative Party Conference in October 2016, she added the 'cosmopolitan (elite)' to the newly formed group of non-belongers. (Sternberg and Stowe, 2018: xxx–xxxii)

Thus, the diverse constellation of specific histories of the First World War uncovered by the CHH has not only given local communities safe, shared spaces to understand the relationship of history to collective community identities, but also given platforms for project leaders to raise awareness of and encourage public discussion of contemporary issues, particularly those surrounding national identity, migration and education policy. As demonstrated by Paul Cornish's essay on the political mobilization of the memory of the First World War between 1917 and 2014, it is nothing new to say that acts of collective remembrance of historical events often serve shared communal or political needs in the present (Cornish, 2018: 225–37). However, what is significant

about these examples from the CHH is the way in which highly regional, localized and translocal forms of shared reflection on communal pasts are not only uncovering 'hidden histories' of the First World War, but are in some cases also actively invoking politics that question or challenge the dominant Conservative Government line on immigration and European affairs, which held sway at the time of their production. These CHH First World War Engagement Centre projects thus demonstrate the more radical potentials of contemporary forms of community-based historical practice to encourage civic debate and geographically decentralized and diverse representations of war and conflict. This is even in relation to encouraging self-critical appraisals of the institutions supporting the CHH. For example, John Beckett's research is uncovering the fact that not much is known about the First World War prisoner-of-war camp at Sutton Bonnington, even though the University of Nottingham owns the building and is also the institutional lead for the CHH.

Beyond the Shared Experience Workshop, the CHH continued to support more challenging histories through the funding of academic and community co-production projects that have looked at the role of British troops in the violent suppression of the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916 (Allwork, 2017f), the post-war race riots in Liverpool (1919) (Allwork, 2017g, 2017h) and the representation of the Armenian genocide in the Gertrude Bell Archive (Allwork, 2017c). To mark the end of the centenary commemorations, the CHH also confronted the difficult legacies of the conflict by creating an interdisciplinary public engagement workshop on trauma and the First World War (Allwork, 2019). This workshop was delivered in 2019 as part of the four First World War Engagement Centre festivals in Birmingham (22–23 March), Belfast/Fermanagh/Omagh (18–22 May), Cardiff (5–6 July) and Glasgow (30–31 August). Participants in each workshop were introduced to the medical history of trauma, given advice on where to find historical primary sources about First World War trauma and encouraged to start thinking about possible community projects. Some potential projects discussed at the Birmingham workshop included: the revisiting of Birmingham hospital archives for evidence of the treatment of war neuroses; the introduction of historical primary sources in schools to discuss the topic of First World War trauma; and the launch of community history projects about those men who were 'shot at dawn' and subsequently excluded from commemoration in local UK war memorials. Each participant was also given a *Trauma and the First World War* research guide and bibliography (Hunt *et al.*, 2019). This was produced by Associate Professor Nigel Hunt and Allwork as part of an innovative public engagement mentoring programme with two clinical psychology PhD students. The guide is now available as a free, online resource through the Imperial War Museums War and Conflict Subject Specialist Network.

However, while many of these CHH projects have deeply engaged the communities directly involved in their production and reception, creating a varied constellation in the UK regional memorial landscape of plaques, maps, exhibitions, plays, school workshops, local history projects and community artworks, the media platform for wider national and international discussions of marginal or more troubling First World War histories is not always there. Thus, the gaze of the UK government, the BBC and the other media has often remained focused on commemorating key battles such as the Somme (1 July 2016) and Passchendaele (30 and 31 July 2017). By contrast, as Ewence and Grady (2017: 6) have observed, local projects often show, 'far more willingness to engage with the minority experience in the conflict than grander national schemes'. Thus, although global and national in scope, the CHH has also been local, translocal and community driven in its engagement with diverse and sometimes provocative 'sedimented histories' of the 1914–18 conflict.

The 'embodied legacies' of the CHH

Reflection Workshops (see Box 2) were more informal in tone and much smaller in scale than Shared Experience Workshops. If Shared Experience Workshops tended to focus on the recipients of larger CHH RDF grants for university–community partnership projects, Reflection Workshops were more likely (although did not exclusively) involve CHH partners who had been awarded smaller-scale CCF grants. At Reflection Workshops, the Impact Fellow and Community Liaison Officer were normally present as conveners, as well as one other member of CHH academic staff. Professor Paul Elliott (University of Derby) was the academic present at the first Reflection Workshop (Edin's Café, Nottingham, 25 August 2016), while Professor John Beckett attended the second Reflection Workshop at Birmingham Library (24 April 2017). They were usually joined by five to eight CHH community project participants.

Box 2: Reflection Workshops

In line with the social sciences tradition of focus groups, Reflection Workshops were semi-structured in design and approach, and normally lasted about two hours. Based on a list of ten questions, participants were each asked questions directly by the moderator, but more casual and spontaneous discussion between participants was also facilitated and actively encouraged (Liamputtong, 2011: 2–3). The questions were developed for Reflection Workshops by Allwork in consultation with Beckett and Noble:

- (1) Why did you want to study the First World War?
- (2) How was your project formed?
- (3) What has your project achieved in terms of outputs?
- (4) What challenges has your project encountered?
- (5) If you had the opportunity to start the project again, what would you do differently?
- (6) What benefits has your project brought to:
 - (a) you as an individual?
 - (b) your team or organization?
 - (c) the communities that you work with?
- (7) What are the benefits of working with:
 - (a) the HLF?
 - (b) the CHH?
- (8) What are the challenges of working with:
 - (a) the HLF?
 - (b) the CHH?
- (9) Having completed your project, do you have a follow-up project in mind?
- (10) If you have a follow-up project, would you be looking to work with:
 - (a) the HLF?
 - (b) the CHH?

These questions were designed to get a balanced overview of the impact of the CHH First World War projects on the individuals, organizations and communities involved, as well as an understanding of their perception of the CHH and the HLF. The Reflection Workshop model outlined here could be adopted and used as part of the evaluation process for other cultural heritage partnership projects.

Reflection Workshop participants often revealed not only the hidden histories of the First World War that their projects had uncovered, but also what Facer and Enright (2016) would call the 'embodied legacies' of their projects. Although each participant's engagement with the centenary had been a highly individual experience, some broad trends emerged, which means that a loose typology of First World War participation can be ventured. This typology includes *transformers*, *retired professionals*, *connectors* and *grassroots participants*. It should be observed that the application of these categories need not always be discrete. For example, an individual could have demonstrated characteristics of being both a connector and a transformer.

Most exceptional were *transformers*, that is people whose professional lives or social position within their community has been profoundly changed or altered by their participation in centenary activities. For example, Kiran Sahota, a businesswoman from Birmingham, led an HLF/Voices of War and Peace/CHH CCF project that resulted in an exhibition on First World War-era Victoria Cross recipients from India at Birmingham's Museum and Art Gallery (12 November 2016 – 28 January 2017). Sahota said of her experience working on the exhibition that, 'I've never felt more empowered, I've never felt more inspired' (Sahota, quoted in Allwork, 2017i). The exhibition contributed to intra-community dialogue between local Indian and Pakistani groups, cutting through tensions that still sometimes exist owing to the legacy of Partition (1947). As a result of her project, Sahota's status within her community has been raised. She continues to be a First World War commemoration activist (Sahota's second project on First World War South Asian soldiers received funding from the HLF in 2018), while her community interest company Believe in Me now actively integrates educational issues into its remit. Believe in Me also submitted evidence to the *Lessons from the First World War* Select Committee Inquiry (House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019: WWO0079).

Irfan Malik, a GP from the East Midlands, could also be categorized as a *transformer*. Receiving part of his funding from a CHH CCF grant, he has been researching the impact of the First World War on the South Asian village of Dulmial. For Malik, this research into his ancestral home 'changed [his] life significantly' (Malik quoted in Allwork, 2016c). As a result of his project, Malik has given talks and presentations across the UK. Some of his audience members have included representatives of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Malik's research on Dulmial has furthermore resulted in interfaith activities and diversity awareness in the UK armed forces. He is collaborating with fellow activists to create a Great War Muslim Memorial in Great Britain (ibid.).

A second group of important participants in First World War centenary projects consists of *retired professionals*. Often these individuals bring a lifetime's worth of professional skills, experience and expertise to the leadership and administration of community projects, and in return they often benefit from the training and social opportunities offered by projects. With this type of participation there is often a particularly pronounced family history dimension. For example, the website editor for the CHH CCF-supported project Radcliffe-on-Trent and the First World War is a retired sociologist. As well as documenting the impact of the First World War on the lives of men and women from the Nottinghamshire village of Radcliffe-on-Trent, it has allowed her to explore facets of her own personal identity, particularly in relation to the role that her grandfather played in the 1914–18 conflict (Allwork, 2017a).

A second example of this type of participation is the role played by Lyn Edmonds as a trustee of the Away from the Western Front charity and Project Manager of the HLF-funded Gallipoli Centenary Education Project (2014–16). Edmonds used to work

as a manager in the NHS, and has a long-term interest in family history, particularly her grandfather's involvement in the Gallipoli campaign. Edmonds has commented of her participation in the First World War centenary that the 'Gallipoli project was a great pleasure for me, I have met lots of lovely people ... and it has given me structure to my retirement' (Edmonds quoted in Allwork, 2017a). Initially supported by a small amount from the CHH CCF, Edmonds and Away from the Western Front won £99,500 from the HLF in 2017. This money was invested in supporting British community projects that raised awareness of First World War-era campaigns in Egypt, Salonika, Syria, Palestine, Africa and Mesopotamia.

The participation of retired professionals in this way affirms the findings of a British Future report, *A Centenary Shared*, that 61 per cent of 50–64 year olds and 65 per cent of people over 65 felt that the First World War was relevant to them. This was the highest proportion of any age group surveyed. For example, only 43 per cent of 18–24 year olds felt the same way (Hough *et al.*, 2016: 27). These First World War projects are also beneficial for retired participants because of the opportunities offered for creative expression. For example, Hazel Thomson, a retired lecturer with a professional background in community work, participated in creating a collectively produced textile banner as part of the University of Derby and Spiral Arts Parks in Wartime CHH RDF project. Alongside researching local history, Thomson enjoys sewing, and commented at the Reflection Workshop (Nottingham, August 2016) that for many Spiral Arts participants:

This sort of activity can be so therapeutic, as I have experienced, but there isn't enough recognition given to this sort of activity in regards to mental health and people's well-being ... The coming together of community ... and people recognising the past ... (Thomson in Allwork, 2016c)

Moreover, a recent CHH project has shown how retirees from specific industries can have an impact on the scope, working practices and research findings of university–community partnership projects. For example, University of Northampton academic Jim Beach's *Everyday Lives in War* and CHH RDF project on the Intelligence Corps during the First World War has been profoundly shaped by its volunteer base from the Military Intelligence Museum. Most of these volunteers are former workers from the intelligence services, although some are current employees.

In an interview in September 2017, Beach noted that intelligence service workers who participate in his project sometimes think through problems associated with the Military History Museum's collection in a very specific way. For example, if the information cannot be found in one record set, the volunteers are often able to suggest another section of the archive where the information might be discovered. This is based on their administrative knowledge of how the Intelligence Corps works. In relation to their contribution to this process, Beach commented:

What they have shown ... is that the information available is of an order that I didn't think was possible ... the depth and quality of the material is way beyond what I would have thought possible at the beginning. (Allwork, 2017b)

In return, the museum's curator thinks that one of the probable pleasures for retired volunteers participating in this project is the feeling of 'getting back involved in the old game' (Allwork, 2017b). These volunteers also benefit from the 'embodied legacy' of learning a new skill set, for while the volunteers are often undaunted by the amount and complexity of the data with which they are confronted, they are often used to

concealing sources for military intelligence work. By contrast, archival history is all about retrieving and referencing all primary sources as part of the process of researching and narrating the past.

The third group of key participants are *connectors*. These are individuals who work for independent businesses and third-sector organizations who are engaged in culture, heritage and education work, and who form a key bridge between the university and the community groups that they seek to engage in co-productive research. Examples of these individuals in CHH projects include Gertie Whitfield, whose social enterprise Whitworks Adventures in Theatre has been funded by a University of Nottingham widening participation grant to engage Grassmoor Primary School in Derbyshire in a drama project based on the village's relationship to the 1914–18 conflict. Also associated with the CHH through a Higher Education Innovation Fund grant is Andy Barrett of Excavate Theatre, Nottingham. Barrett has worked with individuals from Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan and Syria who are linked to the Nottingham Red Cross group to produce the play *In Flux* (2017). Equally, funded by a CHH RDF award, Jenny Anthony and Maureen Elliott from community arts company Spiral Arts worked with Professor Paul Elliott and volunteers from the Derbyshire community to create a patchwork banner depicting First World War parks in wartime.

These independent businesses and third-sector organizations, or *connectors*, have benefited from First World War Engagement Centre projects in a number of ways. Whitfield has commented on the importance of the CHH's institutional recognition and financial support for small start-ups (Allwork, 2016c), while Barrett commented on the 'embodied legacy' of being able to experience his home city of Nottingham in a new way:

I've been able to engage with a whole community or a number of different communities that I live in and amongst. I knew that they were there, but I didn't know their stories, so it has expanded my sense of my city and the people that live in it. (Allwork, 2017a)

Meanwhile, Anthony and Elliott from Spiral Arts noted how their project enhanced their research skills in local archives, adding a new dimension to their professional artistic practice. Their CHH project also raised awareness of their company, as the mayor and other local government representatives came to the public exhibition of the textile banner (Allwork, 2016c).

Finally, the fourth group of participants in the First World War Engagement Centres are *grassroots participants*. These are the people who are at the heart of these community co-production projects and who have made local community events across the UK happen. As is to be expected, this group is as diverse as the projects that have been commissioned by the First World War Engagement Centres. Among many other groups, the CHH has worked with primary school children, secondary school young adults and a diverse range of adult community groups dedicated to learning about the First World War. These have included village history groups in Belper and Radcliffe-on-Trent; former military intelligence officers in the Midlands; a Sikh women's group in Leicester; a Black British community group in Liverpool; Syrian and Iranian diasporic groups in the Nottingham area; Iraqi, Christian Assyrian communities in Northern England; a community group with learning disabilities in Oxfordshire; and the descendants of German internees across the UK and Europe (Allwork, 2016d, 2017c, 2017d). These CHH *grassroots participants* have even included what Keith D. Lilley has called 'citizen cartographers', namely those individuals committed to geographically mapping the topographies of the First World War

(Lilley, 2018: 115–34). For the CHH, this has taken the form of the textile map created by Spiral Arts and their volunteers, and the illustrated camp map produced by the Lofthouse Park project, as well as Writing on the Wall's mapping of Liverpool's post-war race riots.

The impact on these community groups is caught less by in-depth conversation in Reflection Workshops and more in the snippets of enthusiasm and viewpoints expressed on social media and in the return of participant questionnaires distributed at the end of projects. Recording and capturing these fragments, which often bear witness to the 'embodied legacies' of projects, has thus often relied on the tenacity of commissioned CHH project leads who have built up the relationship of trust with their *grassroots participants*. Unfortunately, project evaluation often takes second place to the delivery of outputs, particularly if project timelines, labour resources and funding are tight. However, when it is carried out effectively, it can show the real community and individual benefits of First World War Engagement Centre projects. For example, an evaluation of Grassmoor Primary School's visit to the Digital Humanities Centre at the University of Nottingham for a First World War education day (13 June 2016) was revealing of the 'embodied legacies' of this activity. Of 24 respondents, at least 13 Year 6 students said that they had learnt new text- and image-scanning skills as a result of their visit to Nottingham's Digital Humanities Centre. The CHH has continued its work with schools throughout 2018 and 2019 through the establishment of its Young People's Hub.

Conclusion

Evidence from the CHH's evaluative work has already been submitted to the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on *Lessons from the First World War Centenary* (House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019: WWO0121 and WWO0123). Its findings have also been distributed to researchers based at the AHRC Legacies project, a major survey of the UK's engagement with the history and memory of the First World War between 2014 and 2019. CHH team members were also present at an event held by the First World War Engagement Centres, 'Communities, commemoration, collaboration: shaping our futures through sharing our pasts' (London, 7 November 2019). The purpose of this event was to reflect on public engagement with the centenary, its achievements, challenges and lessons for engagement practice going forward. More broadly, the team hope that the evaluative methodology developed by the CHH can provide a model for evaluative frameworks that are used in future academic and community collaborations marking major historical moments in public life.

By 2019 and the end of the centenary commemorations, there was broad public appetite for community-engaged research into the contribution of the Commonwealth. A British Future poll published in 2016 revealed that 77 per cent of people agreed with the statement: 'The British War effort included Empire and Commonwealth soldiers from countries including India and the West Indies, Australia and Canada. It is important for integration today that all of our children are taught about this shared multi-ethnic history' (Hough *et al.*, 2016: 13). The CHH is just one of the many centenary initiatives that has helped contribute to this growing public interest. However, it has to be said that this interest in recognizing a specific aspect of the UK's 'shared multi-ethnic history' sits uncomfortably alongside other UK government, political and public opinion realities during this period. These include the Windrush scandal (2018), and

the appeal of anti-immigration rhetoric among certain audiences before, during and after the Brexit campaign.

Furthermore, other histories with which the CHH has engaged, such as stories of displacement, internment and atrocity, including the Armenian genocide, still remain relatively 'under the radar'. For, as noted in the *Lessons from the First World War Centenary* report: 'The centenary commemorations reached new audiences, and enabled the public to be more exposed to hidden or less well-known histories. But this approach could have been more systematic and better embedded in all strands of activity' (House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019: 14).

Future challenges for the CHH include preserving and further publicizing the offline and online legacy of its community history projects, as well as working with educational policymakers to integrate some of the key findings from these less well-known First World War histories into the National Curriculum. It is also hoped that the lessons in commemoration, co-production and evaluation learnt from initiatives such as the CHH will continue to shape policymakers' thinking about the representation of minority, marginalized and/or difficult histories in future major commemorative moments, such as the centenary of the Second World War.

From the perspective of funders, the impact of First World War Engagement Centres such as the CHH has been positive. The REF 2021 UK audit and panel review of research is pending, including its assessment of Impact Case Studies that show the benefits of UK research for pedagogy and user groups beyond the university (REF, 2019: 68–76). Within this context, each First World War Engagement Centre is a potential REF 2021 Impact Case Study in itself. However, each First World War Engagement Centre has also been responsible for supporting smaller university–community research projects at other higher education institutions. This has potentially produced, or at least strengthened, the evidence base for a multitude of Impact Case Studies at universities across the UK. Moreover, the types of impact produced from CHH projects have strongly coalesced with the HLF's aims for First World War commemoration. Namely, the CHH has diversified the range of community perspectives offered on the history of the First World War, it has reached out to young people, it has contributed to the recognition and/or preservation of heritage sites, and it has encouraged the development of skill sets that have brought benefits to both community partners and academics. For example, university undergraduates have been taught media skills, secondary school students have honed their performance practice, community members have connected with the history of their home region, and volunteers have benefited from research skills workshops. Mediating a range of 'sedimented histories', these skills and experiences nonetheless comprise what Facer and Enright (2016) would call the lasting 'embodied legacies' of the CHH.

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Notes on the contributor

Larissa Allwork is a researcher in impact at the University of Derby. She has conducted research as part of the AHRC Centre for Hidden Histories since 2016, first at the University of Nottingham (June 2016 – September 2018), and then at the University of Derby (September 2018 – present).

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