

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: Lessons from the First World War centenary, HC 2001

Tuesday 26 March 2019

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 26 March 2019.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Damian Collins (Chair); Clive Efford; Julie Elliott; Paul Farrelly; Simon Hart; Julian Knight; Ian C. Lucas; Brendan O'Hara; Rebecca Pow; Giles Watling.

Questions 1 - 70

Witnesses

I: Matt Anderson, Deputy High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, London, Diane Lees CBE, Director-General, Imperial War museum, Sir Anthony Seldon, Vice-Chancellor, University of Buckingham, and Jenny Waldman CBE, Director 14-18 NOW.

II: Lord Ashton of Hyde, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Dr Andrew Murrison MP, Prime Minister's Special Representative for the Centenary Commemoration of the First World War, and Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#)
- [Imperial War Museums](#)
- [Imperial War Museums supplementary](#)
- [Imperial War Museums further supplementary](#)
- [Imperial War Museums additional supplementary](#)
- [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- [14-18 NOW](#)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Matt Anderson, Diane Lees, Sir Anthony Seldon and Jenny Waldman.

Q1 Chair: Good morning. I would like to welcome the witnesses to this special session of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee to consider the lessons of the First World War centenary period. It struck the Committee that this was a unique moment of commemoration, involving national and international aspects, with particular significance for the Commonwealth as well as other countries around the world. It involves significant points of national focus, a huge amount of local and regional activity, and a unique combination of both historical commemoration and educational and culture events.

We want to use today's session—and the 115 written evidence submissions we have received from people all over the country—as an opportunity to gather the lessons from the First World War centenary period. The report, the transcript of today's session and also the written evidence submissions can be published as a single document and will hopefully be a resource that can be drawn on in the future when the country looks to commemorate significant moments in our past.

In 2012, when David Cameron launched the centenary programme at the Imperial War Museum, he said he wanted the centenary to be about commemorations of a truly national moment. I would like to ask the panel if they could highlight what they think were the most significant moments of commemoration during the period of the centenary, but also whether they consider that the greatest impact was from single national events or through multiple local and regional ones. Diane, given that it started at the Imperial War Museum, perhaps we can start with you.

Diane Lees: It is really interesting. As we reflect back on what for most of us is six years of activity, or even in some cases eight years, I think it is a combination of things. The mixture of the programme has meant that lots of people who would not normally get involved in state events—who would not stay in to watch the cenotaph service, for example—wanted to get involved in local things. It is quite hard to pick those moments. I can pick a favourite, which Jenny is going to love, which is the Jeremy Deller project and We Are Here, which is the soldiers project, which I think reached a mass audience in a way that we never imagined it would. I would pick that as the most popular.

We had some very beautiful commemorations. I think the DCMS team did an amazing job over those four years, of following the history but also giving them a different flavour. When you look, I hope what the evidence has shown you is exactly as you described it, Damian, which is that whole participation, from the grassroots up and from the state down. It was an amazing combination. I am ducking the question, which you probably noticed.

Q2 Chair: I should probably declare my interest as chairman of Step Short



and having been focused on a regional First World War project.

Diane Lees: You were one of the first people in my office when we started talking about the centenary of the First World War, I remember.

Q3 **Chair:** I did not know I was one of the first, but I am glad I was. Jenny, when you embarked on creating the cultural programme for the centenary, could you have envisaged that it would become as big as it became, in terms of not just the works themselves but the popular interest they inspired?

Jenny Waldman: We started in July 2013 and our first season was 10 months later. I think we had no idea how popular it would be. One of our very first events was called Lights Out, where we invited everyone to turn their lights out on the eve of the centenary of Britain's entry into the war, and we created a number of arts projects in Edinburgh, Bangor, Belfast and London, and digitally.

We decided to do an omnibus survey—a TNS survey—after that to find out how many people had participated in Lights Out, and we were astonished and thrilled to find that 16.7 million people had switched their lights out. That was something that people could do in their own homes. They could also gather together in any of the cities where we had an arts creation.

I think that through the centenary we found that more and more people were interested and involved and wanted to get engaged, and I hope that the arts programme 14-18 NOW has been part of that because people could come to the rich heritage of the First World War through the contemporary arts.

Q4 **Chair:** In terms of participation, which were the most popular projects as part of 14-18 NOW?

Jenny Waldman: There were a number of participative projects, from the poppies, obviously, where volunteers were helping to plant the poppies. Also Pages of the Sea, the beautiful Danny Boyle project on beaches on Armistice Day on 11 November 2018. Each of those have a resonance locally as well as a feeling that people are participating in something. Maybe you might have been on a beach in Folkestone, in Sunderland or in Ayr, but also you knew that there were 32 other beaches around the country where people were doing the same thing, and you could also follow it online or on broadcast.

Q5 **Chair:** Thank you. Matt Anderson, the centenary of the First World War clearly means different things to different countries and there are different stories attached to them. From the outset, what was the approach the Australian Government wanted to take?

Matt Anderson: I guess it was slightly different because for Australia the First World War was a defining national event. We were founded as a federation only in 1901. For us, the centenary of the First World War was



HOUSE OF COMMONS

chosen as a defining moment to celebrate the centenary of service that followed.

For us, it was not just about 1914-1918. There was a continuous thread from 1914 to today. I was our ambassador in Afghanistan most recently, so in 2015, when I conducted the ANZAC Day ceremony in Kabul, it was very much about saying there was an unbroken line from the soldiers who leapt ashore at Gallipoli in 1915 to those who are continuing on that day: the soldiers, sailors, airmen and women who were at service on that day.

Australia's commemoration events did not just focus on 1914-1918; we commemorated through the 1914-1918 programme everything from Tobruk to Alamein, the Battle of Britain, the war in the air, the war in the seas, peacekeeping, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam. Any anniversary that occurred throughout that period was funded under the 1914-1918 grants just to make sure that there was an unbroken line from service and sacrifice of the First World War to the current day.

Q6 Chair: In the programme itself, was a particular focus placed on Gallipoli and the ANZAC story?

Matt Anderson: There certainly was in 2015. There was certainly a focus on the centenary of Gallipoli, right the way through to Villers-Bretonneux, which of course happened on ANZAC Day 1918, and the opening of the Sir John Monash Centre, one of our major commemorative events, at Villers-Bretonneux in France. The focus was not only on Gallipoli, but Gallipoli was important. It was a defining moment, but of course we lost 8,000 men in the Gallipoli campaign and we lost another 52,000 on the Western front, so it is very important to put it into context. It was certainly the first time that we leapt ashore as the Australian Imperial Force. Of course, Australia was in the Anglo-Boer War in 1901. We still had soldiers in Africa, and they popped on an Australian uniform rather than a state contingent uniform. For us, it really is about trying to compress all that together and tell the defining moments of the First World War and how that continued to shape the nation that has grown up from it.

Q7 Chair: For the work of the High Commission in London, how well do you feel you were able to co-ordinate with UK Government Departments, or was that necessary?

Matt Anderson: We certainly co-ordinated very well. We are blessed by the relationship we have with the Imperial War museum, in particular. We are honoured with having a seat, because the high commissioner sits on the board of trustees of the Imperial War Museum, so of course there was a very close cross-referencing of what we were doing in Australia with what was happening here. I know that Diane has a very close relationship with Brendan Nelson, the director of our war memorial back in Australia. Any information we needed we were able to get very readily and compare notes, and occasionally nudge them along to remind them



that there might be a Commonwealth element to a commemoration or there might be an Australian element. That is what I get paid to do: to put Australia in the frame. Unashamedly, I get paid to advance Australia's interests, but there was never any resistance or hesitation, and I am very happy with the support and the service we got from DCMS and, of course, the Imperial War Museum.

Q8 Chair: Thank you. Sir Anthony, you said that you wanted the centenary commemorations to have the effect of etching the First World War in the minds of young people. Obviously, with these commemorations, we are talking about what has become rapidly a historical event, something that is outside of living memory. Do you feel that there was the right emphasis on engaging young people with the centenary commemorations? If you do, what do you feel was the most effective work?

Sir Anthony Seldon: Yes, I think there was a right emphasis, and I do think that 14-18 NOW has been a spectacular success. It is a model for lessons learned, and not only for the young but for the whole nation, of how to do this really well—and I mean really well. It was all the harder because it was against the background of Brexit. There were many discordant noises off, yet we steered clear of political difficulty. We were a unifying point for the nation all the way through. We started very strongly with Lights Out in August 2014, all the way through to those beaches on 11 November 2018. Eight million young people under the age of 25 engaged with our work. Peter Jackson's "They Shall Not Grow Old" sent DVDs with follow-up material to every school.

I should just say that I am the only person in this country who has run schools and universities, so I do cover the whole range of ages from three to 94—the age of my oldest student. I am keenly interested in what is happening. Young people have a natural interest—look at the interest in the Imperial War Museum—in the First World War, in some ways greater than in the Second World War when it comes to school visits. I have run 60 such visits. I was very proud to be associated with this. Also, the wonderful links we had with all the artists, but with DCMS, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and with key individuals—Andrew Murrison one of many. It was a very well supported, very well moderated campaign, which succeeded, I believe, superbly well.

Q9 Chair: Were there aspects of understanding the First World War that you wanted to bring out through the centenary programme, particularly the cultural programme, particularly to inspire younger people? Maybe there were stories and insights into the war that were not normally covered in the curriculum or maybe had not been understood in the past.

Sir Anthony Seldon: The participation of BAME communities, the involvement of women, the contribution of all sectors of the country and of what was then the empire, the fact that it was a profoundly unsettling and socially disturbing event, of which some good things came out of the horror: a more civilised country. Yes, I think it took it away from the



bombs and the gas and the dead bodies and gave a much more holistic understanding to young people.

But we have to be honest. We did ask in 2013, "What are the lessons of the war?" Clearly, the world did not learn the lessons from the First World War. One could say, perhaps a little frivolously, the lessons of 14-18 NOW would be that there would not have to be a 39-45 NOW. We would not have to repeat the same experience, but it was such a good experience that I think that something like it should be repeated.

It was difficult, if we think about it. There were no single lessons. There are much more singular lessons you can draw from, say, the experience of the Holocaust in the Second World War.

- Q10 **Chair:** It is a package that is all very interesting because, as you say, there was no particular road map for you to work from here, and the starting point would have been, I suppose, investing in major museums and galleries that seek to address the history of the period and in large outdoor national commemorations with which we are largely quite familiar. Obviously, the programme itself was much more rigid than that.

Sir Anthony Seldon: I should just mention that I had been involved in the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. At that stage I was running Wellington College, which is the national memorial to the Duke of Wellington, and we were so much more successful here in reaching the young. That war, at the beginning of the 19th century, was every bit as significant in the 19th century as the First World War had been on the evolution of the 20th century. We found it difficult in that campaign to reach out and to think how we could really change people's minds.

- Q11 **Chair:** Thank you. I have a final question now for Diane Lees. Obviously one of the major investments made during the centenary period was the refurbishment of the Imperial War Museum and the creation of the new First World War galleries. As a museum director, what do you think the public response to that has been?

Diane Lees: It has been absolutely amazing, because of course it is part of the transformation of the Imperial War Museum's main site. One of the things that we set out to do was to surprise people with the narrative. Rather than it just be, "And tanks appeared on this day on that battle," it had that rounded people story. If you look at the underpinning messaging around all the success of our participation programmes, they have been about telling stories about real people and not about grand narratives. I think the gallery has done that incredibly successfully.

The ALVA—Association of Leading Visitor Attractions—figures are out today. We saw a massive uplift at Imperial War Museum North with the poppies, and our exhibition "Lest We Forget" saw a 34% increase in visitor numbers. We have obviously resonated hugely with those audiences. In fact, the poppies might have left Imperial War Museum North, but the visitors have not, and that is a huge success for us to be



able to maintain those audiences. The visitor numbers are consistently high to those galleries. Talking of 1939-1945, obviously our next phase is the new Second World War galleries.

You are absolutely right to pin down the fact that that is the traditional approach. The traditional approach is to do a very nice exhibition and to do the big state commemorations. I think what has resonated with audiences that are not traditional audiences to either of those occasions, to enable them to participate, has been because of the success of the programme that has been wrapped around it and the risks that have been taken in that programme. It is important to say that there were risks taken, because we did not know how we were going to sustain four years of activity and whether the public would care after 2014. We did not know what stories would come out of the woodwork, if you like, that would enable us to tell those hidden histories.

The thing that all of the organisations worked together with most successfully was tone. The most critical thing in the four years is managing that tone. When you look at the different narratives in different countries, when you look at what you might do in Serbia as opposed to what you might do in Canberra, when you look at what we had to do with the Easter rising in Dublin, all of those national narratives in the home nations need very sensitive handling. I think all of us had a complete set of empathy injections around the tone of the commemorations, and that is what made it successful.

Sir Anthony Seldon: Speaking as a historian, I think that will be one of the more remarkable aspects, as well as the quality of the artistic work that has come out. We could have offended so many people and it could have been divisive, particularly during Brexit. We could have drawn conclusions that we needed to work with Europe. It could have become a polarising issue. That never happened—Ireland and the Commonwealth. It could have been in schools seen as an excuse, with knife crime prevalent, to increase violence. Instead, the messages that came out were the understandings about the suffering of the families, the lost ones, the suffering on the frontline. It plugged into the mental health narratives prevalent in schools. What could have been high hazard in fact was civilising, so it was well negotiated not by me but by the team, and it was safe and helpful.

Q12 **Ian C. Lucas:** Don't you think that is because there was such a high level of local engagement and buy-in from communities, certainly the one I represent, and massive buy-in to all the different issues and stories from this commemoration?

Sir Anthony Seldon: Ian, can you remind us which constituency you represent?

Ian C. Lucas: Wrexham, where Robert Graves signed up to join the army.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Jenny Waldman: I would absolutely agree with that, and I think that one of the other aspects of the success was that there were a number of different programmes, a number of different organisations involved—Diane has mentioned many of them—and DCMS acted as the moderator of all but not the director of it, so that each organisation could have its own independence, there could be community activities, arts activities, large-scale museum activities, international activities, church, state, military and so on. The almost patchwork worked very well together. There was no singular narrative. We did not all have to agree about the causes or consequences of the First World War. We did not tell artists what to think. They came up with projects that opened up stories, both hidden and well known, and different perspectives. Every person who engaged with it could bring their own personal experience and family experience to the commemoration.

Diane Lees: The centenary partnership that the Imperial War Museum ran was set up specifically to allow any community to get involved. We started off with this grand target of having 100 community organisations by 2018, and we surpassed 4,100. It is largely digital delivery.

There was also a whole thing about how much of people's response would we want to control? There were lots of conversations about quality, about what was appropriate, and very early on we decided that that was definitely not our job to do and would restrict these community-based responses to the subject. 1914.org was giveaway resources, so you did not have to go away and research the entire history of the First World War because we had done it for you. There were images, and information on how to market your event, how to write an education pack and so on. All that support was there to try to help communities do what they wanted to do but be part of that national programme as well.

Q13 **Julian Knight:** You just touched on it, and probably if I think about the commemoration and think about the last four years, it is images that really burn in your mind, is it not, in terms of the poppies and so on, and those fantastic artworks?

Diane, you mentioned risk as well, which is really interesting. In that perspective, what do you think is the difference that you made by taking this art-based approach? What are the risks you run? Do you think you could have achieved something similar without it? What are the risks that you run by taking this bold approach?

Jenny Waldman: It was a bold approach. When you commission an artist, it is an open invitation. We had the very important relationship with our host, the Imperial War Museum, and the quality of its archive and archivists and historians, to invite the artists to come to the IWM and find out more and talk to experts.

Then the artist creates a work, and you have no idea what the impact of that work will be. For instance, when Jeremy Deller had an idea that on 1 July 2016 hundreds of First World War soldiers would appear on stations



and in shopping centres right across the country, we had to work out how to do that. We brought together 28 theatres right across the UK to help us in a very practical fashion make that happen. We set up a media campaign, which was highly unusual, which was to keep everything absolutely secret until 8.00 am and then make it as widely known as possible. The risks involved with that were absolutely huge. The biggest of those risks was that no one would notice at all.

In fact, 2 million people saw those soldiers, and the emotional response was quite phenomenal. The moment that I saw the first soldiers handing out cards on Waterloo Station and people just looking at the cards and starting to cry and hugging the soldiers was a very emotional one for me. Until that happened, we had no idea what the success or otherwise of it would be. The artist was very keen that, as well as keeping it secret, it would happen right across the UK, including in Northern Ireland. Putting First World War soldiers, British soldiers, on to the streets of Northern Ireland carried huge risks, but we managed those risks with the expertise of our Northern Ireland advisers, with the police service in Northern Ireland and with the brilliant theatres in Northern Ireland, who know their communities very well. The success of that project was evidence that the cultural community in the UK is immensely strong and the combination of contemporary arts and heritage is hugely successful, and that it is absolutely worth taking those bold risks.

Diane Lees: I agree completely. The Imperial War Museum is now responsible for commissioning the war artists. We were familiar with the risk, but I have never sat in a room where we have committed public money to a project that we could not talk about, we could not advertise and we did not know was going to be a success. All of us had those moments of going, "Is this really the right decision?"

Q14 **Julian Knight:** You run the risk of ridicule.

Diane Lees: You do. You do.

Julian Knight: I did not read one story during the whole time about how much this cost, "What a waste of money" or anything like that, and there was no story of ridicule as well, which is quite amazing considering the number of artworks that were—

Diane Lees: I do think it is exactly as Jenny said, which is what the programme did successfully is it used contemporary arts to explain heritage. That is the difference. It was vested in history. It was accurate in history. Every single name on the cards that those soldiers gave out on that day was somebody who died on 1 July 2016—1,400 names. We did check the uniforms. You have no idea how difficult it is to get 1,400 replica First World War uniforms that are accurate. It is that combination of great creative responses to very solid historical research, and again those conversations about tone.



In Northern Ireland, in particular, what that project did was eventually enable us to get the poppies into Belfast as well. There were incredibly important relationships built around making those projects happen that underpin the success of it and helped us managed the risk.

Sir Anthony Seldon: I just want to give you an example to show how difficult it was and could have been to engage the country with art. It was partly, Julian, the cynicism against the arts community from the public at large. I want to make this point also as a historian. It is much harder to sell the First World War than the Second, because in the Second there were far more clearly good guys and bad guys, and a good cause and a bad cause, and lessons learned that emerged from that war. None of those applied, so it was much harder.

The example on artwork is a project that I was involved with as executive producer, which was not a 14-18 NOW project. It was a film, "Journey's End", with a top cast that included Paul Bettany and Toby Jones—you will know these and other names. We made that film, it came out a year ago, and it had nothing like the resonance of the arts projects of 14-18 NOW. I think that shows that it is not easy to interest the country in the First World War, because that film should have been a runaway success, and it was not—certainly not in terms of sales or people going to it. I think the success of the artwork on an unpromising field was down to the quality, the imagination and diversity, the locality in Wrexham and elsewhere, and an acute sensitivity to local need.

Q15 **Julian Knight:** We talked about the emotions there. What are the numbers? What is the evidence you have that you reached new, diverse communities through this project? Diane, do you have anything to add in that regard, and Jenny?

Diane Lees: The statistics are incredible. We estimate that about 4.5 million people were involved in the centenary partnership itself in terms of audience, but there were also thousands of volunteers putting together those projects. We had 40,000 schoolchildren, for example, involved in our project, where we did an education touring programme with "War Horse" and the National Theatre. Our school visits were at capacity, and we do something called the Ministry of Memory, which looks at remembrance and new ways of looking at remembrance. That was fully booked for the four years. It ends literally at the end of this week, because we will switch it to a differently focused programme.

There were about 400 volunteers working on the war memorials project. They put 40,000 images of war memorials and 1.13 million names added to the register that people could then hit. We get 7.7 million lives, through stories told on our digital site for lives of the First World War. In terms of numbers, we can break it down into things like incredibly diverse theatre projects with organisations with 11 people into the mass participation that we have seen, for example, with 14-18 NOW and the poppies tour. The statistics are absolutely extraordinary.



If you add to that the reach of things like the Peter Jackson film globally, we had an exhibition in Melbourne where we managed to get one of the 60-pounder guns, the big Somme guns, to Australia. That topped 300,000 visitors just in Melbourne in 2015. There has been a massive amount of public engagement beyond what we ever could imagine. It is a bit like the centenary partnership. You start off with the target of 100 and it is completely blown out of the water. On engagement, the statistics are absolutely incredible.

Our big challenge now, and our legacy, is to make sure that we find ways to stay connected with those audiences.

Q16 Julian Knight: Jenny, do you have any thoughts?

Jenny Waldman: Our independent evaluation and YouGov surveys suggest that 35 million people engaged in the 14-18 NOW programme, including, as Anthony said, 8 million under the age of 25. That was, as Diane says, way in excess of our initial ambitious estimate of trying to reach 10 million people over the five years.

Some 61% of our programme was free, and much of that was large-scale, outdoors and in the public realm. Of course, once you do that, the diversity of the demographic increases hugely. For projects such as Pages of the Sea, Lights Out and We Are Here, the demographic more accurately matched the UK demographic than anything in normal arts and heritage. This idea of taking our heritage and our arts practice outdoors and making it free and making it available to the public where they are is one of the lessons that I think we should take on.

Q17 Julian Knight: You do not feel that there are any areas that you did not quite reach? You feel as if actually the figures that you have just quoted there, Jenny, effectively mean that you have got through to the BAME communities, you have got through to all diverse communities in the country? Is that your feeling?

Jenny Waldman: I do feel that, and I think the subject matter also lent itself—this was a global war, and the stories of the former empire colonial forces were beautifully told. We did a project in Brighton Pavilion called “Dr Blighty”, which was about the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim soldiers who were there because the pavilion had been turned into a hospital by 1915, and that culminated each evening with outdoor video projections on to the beautiful Brighton Pavilion, telling that story, and that was seen by 50,000 people live. Within a week, half a million people had viewed it online. Those stories, because they reach different sectors of our communities and because they are in different places around the UK, I think did reach a new audience.

Diane Lees: Can I just add to that? The other thing is that because a lot of the work was ground-up, it has allowed people to tell the stories of their communities or their family experiences. As part of the partnership, we had a women’s project in Iran. By enabling people to come and tell



their stories in the way that they wanted to, I think we took down quite a lot of the barriers to participation that you see in some of the big, more framed, more organised, officially stamped projects.

- Q18 Julian Knight:** That is a really interesting point, because it takes me on to another area to a certain extent. With these big national projects, these stamped, framed projects, does that compete with localism? How do you mitigate the potential for that to swamp localism? How did you find that you mitigated that or you made sure that did not happen; that you did not end up swamping local initiative?

Diane Lees: I think one of the interesting things is that we consider what we call the heartbeats in the centenary period. Where the 14-18 NOW programme stepped up and the state programme stepped up was 14-16-18, although there were state events going off in the interim years. It had a heartbeat and a pace to it, of lifting it to state and then leaving it to local. I think that worked really well. There was space for something locally to be seen as being important over that span of time.

Julian Knight: The span of time helped, yes.

Diane Lees: We are an organisation that is anniversary-driven. We are in the middle of D-Day 75 at the moment, and it is literally a very short period where you also do not get the luxury of doing major education programmes because it takes a long time to bed those into schools. We started the Peter Jackson film in 2012 and it appeared in 2018. We have had that advantage as well. I think there was enough space in that time period to allow local voices as well as national voices to be heard.

- Q19 Julian Knight:** If there is a further event that is not quite such a long time period, what lessons would you learn from your experience that you could apply to that?

Diane Lees: I think it is about lead-in time. As Jenny quite rightly said, how they pulled off their first programme so brilliantly I have no idea, because we had started planning in 2010 for 2014, and these guys came in with 10 months to start the programme. Always—I think the DCMS team would say the same thing—there is never enough time to plan.

The other thing is money, because we managed to sustain funding across that four-year period, and that was a massive enabler for making things happen. Also, where we spotted gaps or parts of the country that were perhaps not engaging as well, we could focus on getting them more engaged because we could spot the signs over that length of time.

- Q20 Julian Knight:** I have a final question, which is a little more overarching. Anyone who wishes to come in on this, please do. In terms of the role that culture plays in driving urban regeneration—the Committee has seen that in many parts of the country—what do you think the centenary commemorations have done? How did that inspire communities to come together to improve their localities? Are there any particular examples of that, and what do you think about long-term



sustainability or legacy?

Jenny Waldman: I would give an example of the poppies tour, which we were pleased to be able to do, with Government support, to 19 places around the UK. A number of them did an economic impact survey of their own through that and found that there were hundreds of thousands of visitors into the village, town or city, overnight stays, tea and buns and car parking, even though the poppies themselves were free to see. In relation to your previous question, that was a national tour that in each place brought out the local and regional stories of the First World War.

I think that in the Pages of the Sea, the Danny Boyle project for Armistice Day on the beaches, 18 of the 32 were in England, and 10 of those were in areas of low arts engagement and possibly low economic activity or investment. I think that by spreading the centenary commemorations right across the country and by taking really great artworks to those communities and creating them with those communities, there was a greater sense of pride in the place that they were in but also some inward tourism.

Diane Lees: I think you might want to ask the National Lottery Heritage Fund that question as well.

Julian Knight: We will.

Diane Lees: It was funding a lot of those legacy projects that you are referring to.

Q21 **Julian Knight:** Sir Anthony, what do you think of legacy? What do you think was the legacy?

Sir Anthony Seldon: I think that culture uniquely binds nations and communities together. It was not part of our brief, unless I have misunderstood, to leave a physical legacy behind. Therefore, in judging us on the question that you are asking, which is the right question to ask, we were a come-and-go organisation that was trying to make an impact on communities by the dazzling quality and the moving quality of the work. Therefore, it is harder because there is no physical legacy on the beaches, most obviously, which for me would probably be the most—I hope you all saw that in real time on Folkestone. Watching the other beaches, I, like everybody else, was close to tears. It was artistically absolutely stunning. The quality of that artistic vision and to see the rising waves wash away from the memory of man and woman the images at that very moment was art at its very finest international quality. I think we did make an impact.

The biggest impact perhaps is showing those local communities how art can bring their communities together as one and for good, and for moral good.

Q22 **Rebecca Pow:** I have two things to say, picking up on that. Just to widen it out, do you think that this theme and this idea could or should



HOUSE OF COMMONS

be used for other historical events and wars? For example, Sir Anthony, you talked about the Duke of Wellington, and about trying to get that engagement on the Battle of Waterloo, which was obviously much longer ago. Could we learn lessons then, and should we start to understand more about our previous history in this kind of way? Would that rekindle people with these things?

Sir Anthony Seldon: I think so, Rebecca, very much. I have written about the benefit of a properly constructed Festival of Britain coming up now. History—I speak as a historian—unites and it gives a common sense of belonging, which is why we need to be sensitive to those who arrived in this country since the First World War, and we were. I think that there are very real lessons.

I am just going to mention one lesson, but there are many others. I could talk about the brilliance of the relationship with DCMS and IWM, but I just want to pick up something that has not been mentioned yet, which is the quality of the team. I hope you do all realise that without the quality of the 14-18 NOW team there would have been a lot of criticism, which there has not been; there has been a lot of applause. There has been outstanding engagement: 45 million people engaged. It was spectacular. The team: Jenny Waldman on my left as CEO, Vikki Heywood behind as a very thoughtful chair holding everything together, and Nigel Hinds, COO, behind me also. Those are just three individuals in that team. Watching in endless board meetings—I use that word with love and with admiration—the sheer skill that they had negotiating all the underwater mines that were floating around and producing high quality. Unless you get the right team—

Q23 **Rebecca Pow:** You could do it for other periods of history, for example? Do you have the right structure in place?

Sir Anthony Seldon: Yes. Rebecca, I think it is more important now that what it means to be a country is coming. Brexit calls this profoundly into question again. What it means to be British anymore. Does anything unite us? I think history unites us, and culture. One of our lessons is that this is a good thing for the country, and particularly what I am highlighting is that you must get the right team, because otherwise everything that could be good will not be good.

Q24 **Rebecca Pow:** In the past, our main memory of wars was war memorials—just monuments. Do you think this is demonstrating that we can do more than war memorials? I speak from the experience of one of my big campaigns to restore the Wellington monument in Somerset, which I hope you might come and visit, Sir Anthony.

Sir Anthony Seldon: I would.

Rebecca Pow: We are doing a big community project around that, and is this not proving that community arts and culture is such a way in to actually making much more of what is basically just a war memorial?



Sir Anthony Seldon: Absolutely, and a lot of good things came out of the 1815-2015 effort, but it was harder, not least because it was further away in time. It makes the point: the further we move away from this war, the more the energy gets sucked into the furnace of the Second World War commemoration, the more important it is to renew and to keep these memorials in towns and villages and cities around the country a focus for activity, because it is one of the few and best uniting things that we have. The humane lessons there that killing is not good, that violence is not good, that compassion and empathy and understanding, reaching out across mental health barriers, across gender, across class, across race, across nation—these are very good things to do. Art uniquely provides the magic, the elixir, to make that happen.

Q25 **Rebecca Pow:** I just want to broaden it out very quickly. Do you think through the art and culture we have also influenced our environment in some communities? For example, in Somerset we have started Somerset Wood, with a tree for every single person who died in World War One.

Sir Anthony Seldon: That is exciting.

Rebecca Pow: It is a phenomenal green space. It is going to be amazing. I see it as not just compartmentalising art and culture, because it has had a much wider impact. Can you give any examples of that, where in other places we are going to leave much more than just a piece of sculpture or something? It has generated more than that.

Jenny Waldman: We approached the National Forestry Commission because it is its centenary this year and it came into existence as a result of the depletion of forests and woodlands because of the First World War. Together we commissioned the artist Rachel Whiteread to create a piece in Dalby Forest, which is a sculpture of a Nissen hut, taken from an original Nissen hut, and that is something now that people will go to Dalby Forest to visit and also to see the beauty of the forest there as well.

Diane Lees: The Woodland Trust has been running a campaign for the last four years on woodlands and recreating landscape because of the destruction of the whole of the western front. It has taken that as an inspiration for creating new ancient woodlands—their words, not mine.

Q26 **Julie Elliott:** I was going to cover the legacy period but colleagues have strayed into my questions, so it is more appropriate that I come in now.

If we look at the legacy of the 14-18 events, which were extraordinary, and the Pages of the Sea project happened virtually at the end of my street, it was incredible seeing little children running around doing their own soldiers and things, actually more so than the big picture of the soldier who died. They could do their own little soldiers. It was amazing. Do you think the legacy of this is just a one-off thing, or do you think there will be ongoing and lasting follow-up activity from what happened in the 14-18 project?



Jenny Waldman: I think there are a number of lasting legacies. Obviously there are the works themselves. Some were ephemeral, such as Pages of the Sea, but others are works of theatre and dance and music that are continuing to tour. Some, such as the statue of Millicent Fawcett outside here or the Rachel Whiteread in Dalby Forest, are permanent sculptures. Some will be accessioned into art collections such as the Imperial War Museum and the Tate.

I think also there is a legacy in the partnerships that were created through the programme. There are heritage and arts organisations that have never worked together before, such as Tate Liverpool and the Merseyside Maritime Museum. They live next door to each other. They collaborated with us and Liverpool Biennial on a dazzle ship, and they have worked together ever since. The three national theatres took part in the Jeremy Deller project and have worked together since. The lost gardens of Heligan and Wildworks in Cornwall are the same. Those partnerships, the realisation that heritage and arts organisations, contemporary arts organisations, although they have different audiences and they have different ways of working, together they can create some extraordinary work and bring each other's audience to that.

There is also something about how things stay in people's memories and how communities come together and the memory of those events that stay with people, that are very precious. I think that it is too easy to say that because there isn't a memorial, there isn't a statue for us all to look up to, somehow that is all over. In fact, a lot of the audience research that we have had has said things like, "My nine-year-old came to this and she will never forget it" or, "This image of a soldier is etched into my memory" or, "I have the card and I use it as a bookmark, and every time I open the page I think of that event." I think that those things do carry forward, and I would say that that is one of the lasting legacies. I very much hope that having an arts programme as part of a national moment will also be a legacy.

Q27 **Julie Elliott:** Do you think there is anything we can learn from what happened in those four years in terms of education? I did not cover this period when I was at school, but what struck me so starkly about the four years was how children and young people really engaged with it in a way that I have not really seen before. Do you think there are any lessons moving into education that it can be beneficial to?

Diane Lees: I certainly think that what we have learned as an organisation is that sticking to a history curriculum route is not the way we get our schools to come to our museum. It is across curricula. It is a conversation. It is skills-based. If you look at our programme, we do something called a documentary challenge, where we now have kids in the museum who choose an object whose story needs to be broken out of the museum, and they make a documentary about it. We are working in different ways with different parts of the curriculum in order to get those stories told. What the response to the First World War has done is kind of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

made us tear up all of our traditional First World War material and think differently about the way in which it can be taught in schools across the curriculum, rather than in just a strict history way. I think that is a liberation for all of us.

Sir Anthony Seldon: Yes, we must not lose the momentum that 14-18 NOW has helped channel in schools and also in universities. Let us remember that this was the world's first World War. There are unique lessons about this as the world's first war. It was a collective not affecting every country but affecting more than any war previously.

The children, as I said, have an affinity towards it, and it comes from partly the response to the poetry that chimes with their own—they can understand the poetry in a way that they cannot quite understand Keats and Yeats, and even Larkin's best-loved poem is his poem about the First World War.

There is something about it, in the way that you learn about medicine and scientific development and social development, the position of women, the bringing in of different nationalities around the world, and politics and economics. It is a wonderful lesson to bring together every single subject on the curriculum, including chemistry and physics, to help young people understand. I am sorry, Julie, that it was not taught when you were at school. Had I been your headteacher, you most certainly would have had it—you probably would have had nothing else but the First World War, to be honest.

Julie Elliott: I did do it in my degree, but not at school.

Sir Anthony Seldon: It is important for young people always. This is the First World War that children, wherever they come from to these shores, learn about, and in that holistic way that takes it away from fighting and blood and knife crime and violence into something that is profoundly the opposite of that: humanising and civilising.

Diane Lees: In terms of the centenary partnership, the original programme was funded through the Arts Council for the 14-18 period, and 86% of the members of that group are voting to join our new Second World War partnership, which is just about to launch for the Second World War anniversaries, and that is very graciously funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund. That will continue.

Q28 **Julie Elliott:** Do you think in your museum it is having an impact on the way you commemorate things moving forward?

Diane Lees: It has had a massive impact. For want of a crude phrase, it has rounded us out in terms of being able to accept risk and for our curators to have the confidence to work with contemporary artists. It has built all of those skills in the museum that will be part of the legacy.

In terms of delivering that digital partnership, we get 80,000 enquiries a year already. With a major anniversary, finding ways in which you can



deliver quality information, the things that people want in a broader, general digital way has been a massive way, and we will certainly continue to run our anniversary partnerships on that basis. It has had a huge impact on the way that the museum thinks about how it will behave towards future anniversaries.

Q29 Julie Elliott: Matt, I wonder whether you could say a little bit about what legacy work you have planned for the ANZAC commemorations.

Matt Anderson: Thank you. I think what was interesting, when we talked before about outreach, from Australia it was very much about taking the centenary of the First World War to the communities and saying, "What do you want to do? How do you want to commemorate this?" and then allowing the communities individually all to be the brushstrokes that would produce the national canvas. That is the way in which we did it. There were 1,600 different community grants that went out, from small communities who just wanted a flagpole, to people who wanted memorial gardens or who wanted footbridges constructed or who wanted avenues of honour that might have been planted after the First World War. Outside Ballarat in Victoria, for example, you have the gum trees that line the Avenue of Honour that named every Australian soldier from that village who fell, to refurbishing all of those, through to education and just saying, "How do we do this differently?" I am a father of three children. How do we tell the ANZAC story in such a way that it resonates with this modern generation?

There are things like museums where you can now touch it. I grew up going into museums where you were not allowed to touch anything. You stood behind the wall, and if you reached an alarm went off. Nowadays it is about discovery; it is about picking stuff up and trying on a uniform and seeing that the hat does not feel very comfortable; or science and innovation and saying, "This is how a periscope worked" or, "This is the science of camouflage" or, "This is the science of medicine, and this is the first time we tried this procedure with this drug in the field, and what does that mean, and how is that lesson promulgated to today's medicine?" For Australia, it has been about trying to be creative and innovative.

It is everything from the Hyde Park memorials and the shrines in Victoria through to local communities, but just giving them the opportunity to express and even research. Communities came to us and said, "We would like to research our history" because they just did not know it. Giving them a chance to tell the history of their district through contemporary eyes, such that it becomes part of the current narrative of that village. One in three Australians were born overseas, to give you a sense of how you need to make it contemporary and relevant. Our narrative is about the First World War in particular. Extraordinary, for a population of 5 million people, 300,000 were deployed overseas, 170,000 were wounded and 60,000 were killed. How do you tell that story that ordinary Australians were capable of extraordinary things, and make that the



narrative of today in whatever construct or context you want to place it? That is what we try to do.

- Q30 **Paul Farrelly:** What was done with the commemoration was just absolutely fantastic, from the ceramic poppies made in Stoke-on-Trent to everything that the Heritage Lottery Fund did in events and commemorations. It resonated with me because I am old enough to remember my granddad, Tom King. He was demobbed finally after the First World War after a tour of Syria in 1919. He was just 20. The first thing he did when he got back was join the Labour Party. Of course, 20 years later, when he was 40, the world had not learned. By then he was working in the Rolls-Royce factory at Crewe building Spitfire engines, so he did not have to go and fight again.

I just wonder whether for people who are not as old as me—my kids and children going through what we are going through politically now—it will just be a memory of, if they remember it at all, funny men in uniform, dates and monuments. I just wonder whether steering clear of controversy is perhaps reinforcing a failure to learn the lessons of war. I just wonder whether you have thought and looked at how other countries maybe have done it differently, if they have. What about France, Germany and Belgium? Maybe I can start with you, Anthony, because you are building a path at the moment that might be called the Lotharingian way.

Sir Anthony Seldon: Paul, as you mentioned it, the via sacra way or western front way is a path along the line of the Western Front designed to be a legacy of the war around which all nations can come. It came out of a vision of the soldier who died shortly after having it, that this should be along the line of the western front. Indeed, there is that legacy. Paul, you are tempting me in. I feel that out of—

- Q31 **Paul Farrelly:** Do we reinforce the notion of Britain as an island?

Sir Anthony Seldon: There were those within the group who could see more clear parallels of the danger of disengagement from Europe, but the nation was deeply split, roughly 50-50, and it would have been extremely hazardous. It would actually have been a rewriting of history. That is what tyrants do. Democratic nations take history in all its nuance and do not take overriding narratives from it. That is at its easiest. Do not take out of the conclusion of the First World War that we have to stay part of Europe and part of the EU. That would have been folly and dangerous and would have split and politicised 14-18 NOW. We did not do that, and rightly so.

Paul, as I said—and I am going to make the point because the point was lost—part of the achievement of 14-18 NOW was that there are not clear lessons from the First World War in the same way that there are from the Second World War, where there are much clearer lessons about how we treat minorities and the vulnerable and about standing up early to demagogues.



We got it right. It was potentially very perilous to have done this at a time when the country was more divided than it has been at any point in peacetime for over 100 years. That was when 14-18 NOW landed on that plateau of deep national division. We managed to safely land the plane, with Jenny Waldman in the pilot's seat, Nigel as first officer and Vikki sending soothing controls.

Q32 Paul Farrelly: Compared with us, did France, Germany, Belgium and other countries do things differently?

Diane Lees: Certainly the kinds of commemorations that were done jointly in France and Belgium with DCMS were, again, very carefully negotiated in terms of tone.

Germany has a different history and is less engaged with its First World War history than with the Second World War and its consequences. They took the traditional approach of a museum exhibition at the Deutsche Historisches and we provided film for a comparative experience. The trench experience was the same and it did not matter what side you fought on, apart from the fact that they were much better at wallpapering their trenches than we were and their toilets were better. There is a whole shared experience story with Germany on that basis that worked very well for us.

In terms of a comparator to what we have done, no, there is no comparator. Australia opted to build the Monash Centre, which is incredible—and to do that on foreign soil was very brave and I am glad I was not on the committee for that one—and is an amazing legacy.

In terms of ordinary people remembering the First World War so that it does not disappear for the next 50 years, the number of people who took the opportunity to do their own family history has meant that they have now their own cultural story, which includes the story of the First World War. One of the most common questions I have been asked over the last four years is, "What happened to my family in the First World War?" That will be part of family folklore now and so it will stay resonant.

There are some big challenges going forward in another 100 years about whether or not the distance—which is probably the challenge at the back of Waterloo 200—will present us with whole different challenges in terms of the way we go forward in discussing the legacy of war.

Jenny Waldman: I cannot speak about the Governments of those countries, but we did a number of projects co-commissioned with German organisations, theatre companies in Berlin, and festivals in Austria, Germany and France. We had support from the Goethe-Institut and the French Embassy for French and Germany companies to come to the UK, the Royal de Luxe giants came to Liverpool. There were about a million people on the streets of Liverpool. That is a French company.



Those productions were seen in France, Germany, Belgium and Austria, as well as America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Each country has had a different approach. Certainly, the artists have found stories that have a resonance in different countries and, as Diane and Anthony were saying, at a very individual level.

I would give one other example, which is the Peter Jackson film "They Shall Not Grow Old". It has a moment in it that is profoundly moving when the men are talking about meeting German prisoners of war. One talks of someone who started chatting to him in English and he found that he had been a waiter at the Savoy before the war. There is that realisation, particularly for the young people who might have been watching that film in their schools or on television, and a sense that we could have been at war for four and a half years with individuals on the other side of no man's land who had worked at the Savoy, spoke very good English and were family men—that was another quote—and that they could all be chums afterwards. That sense of the futility of war came out very strongly in that moment.

Sir Anthony Seldon: Very quickly indeed, another marker to show how well we have done it is that America, which lost twice as many soldiers—117,000—as Australia, was very shallow and disappointing in the way that it marked and honoured the surviving families. There was bitter disappointment from colleagues in the US.

I am chair of the National Archives. We are hoping that that interest in family history will be a living legacy of this because that makes families deepen a reverence for earlier generations. That sense of belonging to a continuity is perhaps better in some of the eastern countries than in some of the western countries and we can deepen that. It is one of many shining beacons from 14-18 NOW.

Q33 **Paul Farrelly:** Anthony, you have provided me with the perfect segue. In 2014 my family and I were in Marseilles during the 70th anniversary of the liberation of southern France. We filmed the French fleets going by and we sent the film to the father of my wife's best friend. His name is Creogh. He was a young GI who came ashore. Creogh is now in his 90s and is one of the dwindling few people who are still alive. There are no survivors of the First World War.

Rather than say, "We have finished one commemoration and now we have to plan for the next one", are there any projects going on to record and film the voices and views, be they political or not, about the lessons learned of people who survived the Second World War and may not be here when we do the next commemoration?

Diane Lees: We have our oral history archive, which has been going since the mid-1970s and was based on the Great War interviews that the BBC did during that period in 1964 when they started to record veterans. We record full-life and do not do just their war experience. We know what happened to them interwar. We know what jobs they went back to. We



know what their life was like post war. We start to see early signs of mental health issues and very interesting trends that have a research base.

We are still recording. Because we run the American Air Museum in Britain, we have a project in the US that is recording the American soldiers who were based in the UK. That runs through our American Foundation. I might have to correct this later, but we have something like 176,000 hours of oral testimony from those people. If you look at our existing Second World War galleries, they start with some testimony of the guys going on to D Day beaches. It is very much at the heart of what the museum has done, particularly since the technology was invented. There is always a great opportunity when there is new technology. We are continuing to do that.

If anyone has any names, email me and we will contact them to ask them whether they will be interviewed. One of our latest interviewees is the current high commissioner for New Zealand, who has a great service history that is now in the archive. We are very happy to do that and so please let me know if you have anybody we need to capture.

Q34 **Brendan O'Hara:** Sir Anthony, you said earlier that history unites but also divides, as we know all too well on these islands, and Ireland has been mentioned quite a few times. I was just wondering, when you first look at the 1914-18 centenary period, of course in Ireland that encompasses far more, how sensitive were you initially to what you were doing on the whole island of Ireland? How difficult was that? Is there anything that you learned that we could look from the way that the island of Ireland looked at that decade of centenaries?

Jenny Waldman: We were incredibly impressed with the whole of the decade of centenaries set-up and the fact that it was across the Republic as well as the north. We were also impressed by the depth of knowledge and sensitivity in the Ulster Museum, in the Lyric Theatre in Belfast, in the Derry Playhouse, at the Nerve Centre, at the MAC and the Belfast Festival. Those arts organisations and heritage organisations have worked within those communities for a very long time.

We did a project around the Easter rising with two Irish companies, ANU and CoisCéim, quite a young theatre and dance company, that looked at one of the particular events of the Easter rising both from the point of view of the Irish women in those tenements and also from the point of view of the British soldiers. Literally half of the audience went through the same event through the eyes, as it were, guided by the different sides of it, and then had an opportunity to speak afterwards.

We did projects around the Irish border with border communities on both sides and an American artist coming in. Again, that was bringing those communities together and listening to the sensitivities they have for each other and for the situation they find themselves in right now. It was an eye-opener for me.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

We worked so closely with the expert cultural community in Northern Ireland that we were able in the end to take the poppies to the Ulster Museum. They presented it absolutely beautifully and had large numbers of people come to see them entirely peacefully. They had a beautiful talks programme around it that they had devised with historians and other experts coming in, also with an ability for everyone to have a say and to talk about it.

Diane Lees: Strategically, before that, we worked with the British ambassador to Dublin and we worked through all of the official channels. There was a document produced by the Irish Government that was the tone document for the commemorations because the political negotiating around the tone of that had to be done at that level.

The museum adopted a policy that anything was available for loan, even if it was on display. Quite a lot of the material from that period is on loan to the Imperial War Museum from Her Majesty and we negotiated with the Palace that anything could go back. One of the Sinn Féin flags is still on display in the Town Hall in Dublin. We also worked cross-border to make sure that there were no elephant traps.

One of the lessons in that is to know what you do not know. Start from the position that you do not know anything and you go and talk to the people who do know. It is a bit like lead-ins. All of the effort that it took to manage that tone made that programme successful and did not put us into any elephant traps, which could easily have happened.

Q35 **Brendan O'Hara:** You said to my colleague Mr Knight earlier on that you had data to say that you had managed to get into communities that mirrored what it looked like. Was there any specific data from Northern Ireland reaching both nationalist and unionist communities equally?

Diane Lees: That is a very good question. I do not know. Certainly not from our evaluation. It might sit with the National Museums of Northern Ireland, which was one of our partners advising us on the communities side in Northern Ireland.

Q36 **Brendan O'Hara:** It would be interesting to see if there was the engagement from the nationalist community in particular.

Diane Lees: It is a good question, yes. The data I have is not cut that way, but we could try to submit it as further evidence.

Q37 **Chair:** I am sure you can follow up with Andrew Murrison on the next panel on that one as well.

Diane Lees: Okay.

Q38 **Brendan O'Hara:** I have one final question, Sir Anthony, to prove that I am taking notes on everything you say. You said that 14-18 NOW had been a spectacular success. Some of the artworks and the commissions have gone internationally. I want a quick picture of what has gone on



tour, where it has gone and how it has been received.

Sir Anthony Seldon: As a non-arty person, I was flabbergasted, impressed and slightly depressed by the quality of the monitoring work that was taking place. In a sense, we asked constantly, "What would we be asked by DCMS at the end?" We were very meticulous at logging and clocking. Here is the guru.

Jenny Waldman: I can give you some examples. The Peter Jackson film "They Shall Not Grow Old" is currently on release in the United States. It has been shown in 1,200 cinemas in every state in the US and it is coming out on DVD in the US next week. It has also been shown in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, as well as extensively in the UK.

We have worked with about 60 international partners to tour and co-commission works such as Akram Khan's XENOS, which was performed across the UK and has also been seen in numerous countries. We have worked with colleagues in Germany, in New York and at the Adelaide Festival to co-commission works that have been seen there as well as in the UK. This is standard practice for arts organisations because a combined commission fund can create larger-scale work and also ensure that that work is seen abroad.

We have about 11 projects at the moment that are still in operation and still touring around the world.

Diane Lees: Shall I add the IWM's list to that? We have talked about the partnership with the Australian War Memorial and the full-scale exhibition in Melbourne. We gave film, photography and curatorial advice to the Gallipoli exhibition at Te Papa in Wellington. We provided the photographs for Peter Jackson's exhibition in Wellington and to the Peter Jackson film. In South Africa we have given support for the TV programme on the sinking of the SS Mendi. In Ireland the loans are our input into the diplomacy and the work around the Easter rising. We have worked through 360 different organisations internationally that showed the "Battle of the Somme" film to 35,000 people. We have volunteers for the Lives Project in Spain, Canada and Singapore. Then of course there is all the broadcast work with the BBC, ITV and Channel 4. We have done about 4,500 hours of TV programming over the last few years and that is all on global distribution.

Q39 **Giles Watling:** I stand in awe of all you have achieved in landing that plane so successfully. Viscount Byng, who fought at Vimy Ridge commanding the Canadians, returned and, instead of building a war memorial in Frinton-on-Sea—I am talking about living memorials—decided to build a memorial club. His words were—and I paraphrase—that he wanted to create something so that those returning from that awful horror would be able to meet with colleagues and keep alive the memories of those they lose.

Are we thinking broadly enough? We have war memorials all over the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

country. Virtually every town and village was affected. Every family in Britain lost somebody or knew somebody involved in the First World War. Should we be doing more living memorials? I understand what you are doing with the western front way. It is incredible. It is open from Ypres to Arras now, is it?

Sir Anthony Seldon: From Ypres to Arras and eventually Canterbury to Freiburg so that we link both Britain and Germany.

Q40 **Giles Watling:** Poignantly, it was the idea of Alexander Gillespie, who died in 1915.

Sir Anthony Seldon: Thank you for remembering that. You are absolutely right.

Q41 **Giles Watling:** Should we be expanding the way we remember these events?

Sir Anthony Seldon: Yes, of course we should. My final comment would be that this is the First World War and those three words say it all: "first", "world" and "war". This is a point, Brendan, about history. There is more damage when we suppress history or when we misread it than when we are open and honest about it. The truth and reconciliation commissions began in Uganda in 1974 and give a splendid example about how embracing the past allows us to move on wiser and to honour those who suffered during the times of trouble.

We are open to all kinds of ideas. The funding for the 14-18 NOW project is closing, but we have primed so many ideas in the minds of communities, educators, politicians, faith groups and others to take the flag forward. We have taken it forward for five years and others now, inspired by what has been done, can take it forward. But we cannot let it go and we must not because, as a great historian said, those who forget the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat it.

Q42 **Giles Watling:** Can I expand that question to Jenny? Do you think we are doing enough for legacy living memorials?

Jenny Waldman: The artworks are the living memorials and they will continue to be seen and to be presented. The Welsh National Opera can remount the beautiful opera, "In Parenthesis", that it created. Publications continue to be read. Most of the 260-plus artworks that we created through our 107 projects in the course of 2014 to 2018 continue to live on, both as artworks that will continue to be seen and as memories.

The example that you gave of the club is a beautiful one, of people coming together to continue to meet and recollect. Those recollections are now no longer personal recollections but they can continue to be the conversation and discussion about what happened in our past and all the different stories. There was an ability we had through the artists of bringing the women's stories to the fore and the global stories that



perhaps had not had quite so much of the oxygen when people thought about the First World War in the past. Those are now all part of our new way of looking at that period in our history.

Diane Lees: There were massive battles at the end of the First World War in local parishes about how to remember their dead. If you ever have a moment, it is one of the most fascinating and fantastic bits of history. People said, "My son would not want a park bench. He would not want a memorial. He would want a library or a new extension on the Mechanics Institute". It is one of the great social movements where we see a lot of legacy. Village halls, for example, might have a memorial in them but the purpose was to build a village hall in memory of those people, not just the memorial.

Q43 **Giles Watling:** You were in touch with many other countries and the story has been told brilliantly in so many different ways. We wanted to tell this story to the youth. I remember First World War veterans. The youth of today will not remember First World War veterans and we are becoming more distant. Did we get enough getting in touch with our ex-foes and saying, "Look, we are united now. We both went through this horror"? Did we tell that story enough to the youth of today?

Sir Anthony Seldon: We can never do that enough. The moment we ever think we have done enough is a worrying moment. The new technologies like the colourisation of the Peter Jackson film allows old evidence to come forward in a format that the young can embrace with the fidelities they are used to, but that is the ongoing lesson.

Out of Waterloo and the Napoleonic wars came a school that was meant for the children of those who had suffered in war. It would have been a good thing had there been more such clubs from Byng of Vimy Ridge set up.

I would hope that we would all want to go forward and continue to live, inspired by the ongoing work and legacy, to ensure that it is not just about the dead and their families, but about us now and how we can live with more hope and more respect for each other, regardless of background, at a time that respect for each other is low. We have to keep the flame high and carry it forward.

Diane Lees: That is the founding purpose of the Imperial War museum: to tell the stories of those individuals to new generations. That is what we continue to do.

Chair: Thank you all very much.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Lord Ashton of Hyde, Dr Andrew Murrison MP and Ros Kerslake.

Q44 Chair: Good afternoon. Thank you for your patience. We ran slightly longer than expected in the first panel, such is the wide range of fascinating issues to discuss and brilliant insights—I am sure we could have kept going all morning. Thank you very much for joining us for this second panel. There may be one or two members who rejoin us but we will make a start now on the questions.

I will start with you, Andrew Murrison. You were appointed as the Prime Minister's special representative and adviser on the First World War centenaries and you have become the institutional knowledge from the Government's point of view through the process. Perhaps you could tell us a little bit about how things started, in terms of the decision to appoint someone like you for that position and to form an advisory board, and the reason the people on that board were appointed.

Dr Murrison: Yes. Firstly, thank you very much indeed for conducting this inquiry; it is absolutely right at this time. We need to record what we did over what amounts to a seven-year period for the benefit of those who may be planning something similar in the future. Before we know it, we will be getting into the foothills of the centenary of the Second World War, believe it or not.

That brings me to the first point I want to make. We began this at the tail end of 2011, when I was appointed. The perception then was that the UK was, if anything, a little bit behind the curve. Certainly, I know David Cameron and Ed Llewellyn had conversations with their interlocutors in Europe along those lines. The reason was very obvious: in 2012 we had the Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics, which were consuming all our resource. It was difficult to think beyond that. My appointment was very much in that context. We needed to get something going. We needed to start making plans. We needed to get things like tone right from the very beginning. That has been referred to already. All of those things needed to be done fairly quickly.

It was perceived that appointing a colleague to initiate that work in collaboration with the lead Department but across the Government and across our arms' length bodies and NGOs was important. I have to say that this was the first time such an appointment had been made. We had a variety of non-ministerial appointments at that time of trade envoys and so on, but I cannot recall another similar appointment to this one being made.

In terms of the advisory group, risk has been referred to already and we did take some risks along the way. The appointment of a very eclectic advisory group was perhaps one of those risks. If you look at the names on that list of advisers, you will see that they are very different personalities. Actually, that was what made it work. It was the right choice to make, but potentially it could have perhaps been less productive than it was. In the event it was extraordinarily successful, I



believe, but certainly in choosing such a disparate group of people with wildly differing perspectives on this material and practically everything else, there was an element of risk taken.

- Q45 **Chair:** Lord Ashton, from the Department's point of view, how has the Department tried to manage the—maybe not necessarily competing—wide range of different public organisations such as museums and galleries and the different areas of Government Departments that have an interest in this? How has the Department sought to bring all those elements together?

Lord Ashton: Of course, I came in towards the end of the process in 2017. I was rather like the Americans in the First World War, in that a lot of the hard work had been done, and hopefully I helped to get it over the line. I was sensitive to all the work that Andrew and DCMS had done up to the time I arrived, but in terms of what had been done before the strategy had been made, that was to be supportive of the partners involved—be it the Imperial War Museum, 14-18 NOW or the Heritage Lottery Fund—rather than directive. We put together at DCMS a skeleton of national events, and we supported others, but we let our partners get on with it. We questioned them and talked to them in the advisory group, it was all gone over afterwards and we evaluated what had been going on throughout the four years. However, we were very much not there to direct. As you know on this Committee, that is in large measure how DCMS works with the arts in general. It is not a good thing for Ministers to direct the arts.

- Q46 **Chair:** Andrew Murrison—Lord Ashton may wish to contribute to this as well—in terms of starting the planning, was it a question of identifying what the major anniversary events were going to be and then thinking about what would be done around those? Obviously an early decision was made on Imperial War Museum refurbishment as well. I would be quite interested to know how you started to plan that seven-year period of work.

Dr Murrison: Well, first we had to decide which was going to be the lead Department. It was not a given that it would be DCMS. Others were considered. In the event, absolutely the right choice was made—there is no question about it. We then needed to sketch out what the four years were likely to look like. This, of course, is unique. There was no blueprint for this. We had never done this sort of thing before. We had to settle on some dates to anchor the material and we did that after some consideration and after consulting historians. We also needed to have a launch and we did that at the end of 2012. David Cameron launched the programme from the Imperial War Museum.

Crucially, we had to get the tone right. It is an easy thing to say but we could have got it wrong. I believe we got it right and we tapped into the public mood correctly. We also had to deal with, obviously, our interlocutors internationally. That involved a great deal of work very early on, and it was by no means straightforward. There are all sorts of



extraordinary expectations that other partners had. There were real fears that the Brits were going to do one thing and that needed to be dealt with. It was all part of setting the scene, getting the tone right and establishing our direction of travel, what we were going to do and how we were going to pitch this. A degree of reassurance was necessary with our partners at that stage.

We also established links with any country that was interested in this material. There were varying levels of interest. This of course was a world war, so you would expect a number of players. However, there were varying levels of enthusiasm for the material. The top ones you can anticipate. We formed an international group that co-ordinated, moderated and shared ideas. That, I think, has been a success throughout.

- Q47 **Chair:** At the early stage of planning, certainly thinking of tone, was there much work in particular with the Governments of France and Belgium? Obviously we heard in the first panel that it has been wonderful just how people marked the death of their friends and relatives after the war. A lot of the commemorations have been at home rather than necessarily at the locations of the battlefields, although obviously the locations of the battlefields themselves are also an integral part of the period of commemoration. Was there a conversation between the various Governments about whether there should be a common tonality to it or was it expected that people would largely do the things that worked for them?

Dr Murrison: It was very much what worked for them, without a shadow of a doubt. If you were to hold such an enquiry in France or Belgium, you would get a different picture entirely, but of course it was not just France and Belgium. France and Belgium were very important, because of course they were the host nations for some of our big state events, although we have heard a lot today about what happened here at home, of course. Most of it was played out in the UK in terms of the sum total of material. Nevertheless, the reference point very often was commemoration onsite, and of course that also involved Turkey, for example.

The important advantage of this dialogue, which we had and established very early on with other partner nations, was getting a sense of what others were doing. It is for others to compare and contrast the product at the end of the day, but I think it was a very useful exercise.

- Q48 **Chair:** If I could just question Ros Kerslake before bringing in some other members of the Committee, obviously funding of heritage is a huge part of any national commemoration. We will probably get into some slightly more specific questions about funding later on, but how big a workstream has this been for the Heritage Lottery Fund in terms of obviously the resource you have given out but also the number of bids that have come in? From your perspective, how would you judge the public appetite for participation in this as a heritage event?



Ros Kerslake: We think it has been huge. It has been an enormous commitment on our part. The first thing it is probably important to say is that we have not funded anything under the banner of the First World War that we probably would not have funded anyway. It is important heritage. What we have done is put a huge amount of energy into raising the profile of the opportunity for communities to think about and be involved in this commemoration.

The outreach work that we have put in, in trying to ensure that people were aware of that opportunity, has been an enormous commitment on behalf of the organisation and, I have to say, hugely successful. As we said in our evidence, in 98% of local authority areas there has been at least one project related to the First World War. We feel it was a successful endeavour to try to raise the profile of this and try to get people to understand the opportunity, at a community level, for them to engage and become involved in it. Just under 2,500 projects in total came forward, which is a significant number even within the context of the number of projects that we fund.

Q49 **Chair:** Can I ask a final question to all of you? Looking back over the centenary period, to what extent do you feel this has been a bottom-up process as well as a top-down one? I am thinking of some of the stories I am familiar with. I believe the story of Walter Tull was discovered as a consequence of a war memorial project. He had largely been forgotten about as a figure of considerable historical interest. How many activities have there been at a local, grassroots level that have brought to the surface stories and themes that were then picked up by the national commemorations?

Lord Ashton: That is definitely true. As Ros will tell you in more detail, the amount of money that we planned for the Lottery Fund more than doubled over the course and that was because of the incredible outpouring of enthusiasm and interest that spread all over the whole of the nation. Our job was to monitor that, as we do, but to leave the art people to get on with it. It worked well. As we originally said, to put a structure in place for national events both here and abroad allowed an outpouring of interest to happen.

One of the things I would like to point out is that there was absolutely no partisanship. There was tremendous enthusiasm not only from communities but from the devolved Administrations, from local authorities and from across Government as well. The normal things that prevent cross-Government working, which are usually arguments over budget, did not happen. Departments were very keen to be involved and they contributed, and again we were supportive rather than directive.

Ros Kerslake: If I could add to that, one of the things that has characterised this whole process—I have been involved only since 2016, but my colleagues tell me this—is that partnership, with the different organisations involved understanding and delivering on their respective responsibilities. The fact that Government, through DCMS, led so well on



those big commemorations was hugely helpful to us in engaging at a local community level.

We put, in total, just under £100 million into First World War projects. As was mentioned earlier, we started off saying that we would put into the specific community project pot—we are talking about relatively small projects here—at least £1 million a year. In fact, that then doubled. It went up to £14 million by the end of the programme because of the huge level of engagement we had from people and that we are still getting. We are still getting people coming in to us now with projects that they want to take forward.

Dr Murrison: What impresses me was the number of first-time applicants, which I think was very high for this piece of work, whereas for other heritage projects it is perhaps rather less so. That bleeds into things such as the number of volunteers that this has attracted, again first-time volunteers. This material is important in its own right but it had so many knock-on benefits in terms of volunteering, access to the arts for people who are not exposed to art and culture in the normal way, and interest in history in general, not simply the history of the First World War. These things are quite difficult to capture but they are very real nevertheless.

Q50 **Brendan O'Hara:** I have one question. It is about the collaboration among the devolved Administrations and also the relationship with Dublin. How did that process work? Are you pleased with how it went? What were the benefits and do you think the benefits were felt evenly across the United Kingdom? Did each of the Administrations and the Irish Government participate as fully as you would have hoped and expected them to do?

Dr Murrison: Right. I will deal with Ireland, which is a special part of this work. First, for the home nations, the answer to your question is that they participated exceptionally well. I visited each early on and my opposite numbers were on our advisory group. Norman Drummond, in particular, for Scotland, was very important in all of this. I remember having an early meeting with Fiona Hyslop in the Scottish Government and discussing what we would do, discussing the UK programme and discussing what the Scottish Government wanted to do, which was to commemorate the uniquely Scottish bits or the bits that Scotland has a particular interest in during this four-year period. I have to tell you that it worked exceptionally well. There was no partisanship, no politics, no difficulty at all during the four-year period, and I think we should all be extremely proud of that.

Some of the best events that have been fielded have certainly come from Scotland. If I may say so, Argyll and Bute feature extremely well in that—wonderful website, great participation from the very beginning with Lights Out and clearly a great deal of interest in your constituency in this material.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Lord Ashton: Can I also add to that? When a UK national event took place in Scotland—the Battle of Jutland commemoration—the Scottish Government could not have been more helpful. There was tremendous co-operation in that.

Dr Morrison: Orkney Council were fantastic; they really were stars. It is invidious to pick out any moment during this four-year journey but certainly Jutland and Orkney are very much up there in my mind. It was quite extraordinary. Again—talk of risk—as you well know, this was not a given at all. The eyes of the world were on Orkney and there was a very large number of very important people scheduled to be there that day. Had the weather been less kind to us it could all have gone very differently.

Can I deal with Ireland specifically? You will appreciate that I am Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee, I am an ex-Northern Ireland Office Minister and I have a particular interest in Ireland. There were elements in Government who were concerned about the commemoration of the First World War with Ireland in Ireland and around Ireland, because it was launching itself into the middle of Ireland's decade of commemorations, which I have to say have been extremely well done. There was a concern that perhaps our commemoration might not be helpful, in terms of the ongoing improved relationship since 2011.

I took the view, and the view was taken, that we had to commemorate the First World War in all its Irish dimensions, and I think we got it right. I made a speech very early on at University College Cork in which I laid this out and there were concerns at that time that perhaps this might not go terribly well. I can quite honestly tell you that that was the most heartening speech I have ever made as a politician, to a packed audience, which was extremely well received. It has gone on since then.

When you attend a show-and-tell event in Belfast City Hall and somebody from the nationalist republican community comes to show you their grandfather's Great War medals that have been in a shoebox in the attic, you may think that is a pretty workaday thing, but it would not have happened a few years ago, believe me. That is a mark of how far we have come. The contribution that commemorating shared history, wars and all, just shows you the power of this to unite people. I almost had tears in my eyes after that event and it was exceptionally heartening. When you see the Cross of Sacrifice being unveiled in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, in the shadow of Daniel O'Connell's tomb, you realise something has changed and you realise the power of this to unite people.

I have to say, of all the elements of the work that I have been involved with over these four years, it has been that Irish dimension that has been the most heartening and, for me, probably one of the most productive things that we have achieved. There have been lots of "coming together" moments, lots of examples of unity in this four-year period, which show



the power of history to do that. I have to say the Irish dimension has been the most impressive for me.

Ros Kerslake: If I could just endorse that, the work across all of the devolved nations has been really impressive: the level of engagement that we have been able to have directly, the level of interest, the number of projects that have come forward and, as I mentioned, the high level of coverage. I think there was a question earlier specifically about nationalists and whether they had engaged. In fact, one of the projects that we took recently to an event in this building was a project related to a group in Belfast who are particularly interested in nationalism and were looking at the role of the Connaught Rangers regiment. We had engagement from all different elements of the community, who were looking at an incredible range of different aspects of the impact of the First World War on the different aspects on life.

Q51 **Brendan O'Hara:** I suppose it was a more political question. It is a question I asked the previous panel about. Is there any data or has any assessment been made of the reach and impact of that and engagement with the nationalist community in the north? Anecdotally it is a great story, I absolutely understand that a few years ago it would have been unthinkable and I applaud the success in getting this far, but is there any empirical evidence or data that says, "We can say that we have had this level of input or engagement from the nationalist republican community"?

Ros Kerslake: I am sure that we could provide data about which of our projects it would be. It would be probably a relatively manual exercise to extract it, but I am sure we could provide something in writing to the Committee.

Dr Murrison: I do not have that level of granularity yet but you will appreciate that there are plenty of pieces of work that are underway, as you would expect for a project of this enormity, to try to get a real sense of where the reach has been. I think anecdote is important, with respect.

Brendan O'Hara: Absolutely.

Dr Murrison: When you see Pages of the Sea in a beach in Donegal, for example, it is a truly remarkable thing—truly remarkable. I know, Giles, you are familiar with Pages of the Sea in West Beach in Clacton and of course so are you, Damian—wonderful Christmas card, incidentally—but when it happens in County Donegal that is a truly extraordinary thing.

Brendan O'Hara: I am not asking you to go and dig it out but when the evidence emerges it might be useful just to keep an eye on that particular set, as opposed to giving yourselves or your hardworking civil servants any more work to do than they already have. Thank you.

Q52 **Clive Efford:** Ros, we have received evidence from community organisations that funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund was essential and in some cases transformative. How did you go about assessing which projects should receive funding? Were you concerned about their long-



term impact? What were your priorities and how did you assess their value?

Ros Kerslake: We used the same criteria that we use to assess all projects. We ask our projects to look at the outcomes they achieve. One of the key things that we ask them to think about is that more people and a wide range of people are engaged in heritage. I think it was mentioned earlier that 57% of these applicants were first-time applicants. To us that is a sign of success because we are very keen to ensure that more people understand the value of heritage and get engaged in it.

We would also be looking at the quality of what they are producing. Because of the types of projects that these were, we would not necessarily be expecting them to produce things that had a physical legacy. Many of them would not have had a physical legacy. I think they did have an intangible legacy in terms of the impact they had on the communities that were involved in them, and that is the sort of thing that we would have looked at. How well were they engaging with their local community? Were they looking outwards and bringing the right people in? Were they seeking to recognise something? Did they have a particular interest in an aspect of heritage?

Q53 **Clive Efford:** You managed to reach 98% of local authority areas?

Ros Kerslake: We did.

Clive Efford: Is that an important aspect, that you wanted to reach out to as many communities as possible, or was it just a fortunate accident that the good projects were all well spread around the country?

Ros Kerslake: No, we did want to reach out to as wide a range of communities as possible. We have teams whose job is to go out and try to get people interested in doing something in heritage who might not otherwise have thought of it. They particularly target areas that in this programme we call "priority development areas", which are areas where we did not feel that at that moment we were getting the right level of engagement. We worked particularly hard at that. It was particularly pleasing for us that we had at least 50%, and in many cases more than 50%, of the projects coming from the UK's most deprived communities. We had significant involvement from young people and people over 60. There were significant successes in the efforts that were made. They did not just happen by accident; it was as a result of some hard work by the teams.

Q54 **Clive Efford:** As a consequence of the commemorations, has it changed in any way how you go about making decisions about funding future projects and how you assess them?

Ros Kerslake: When we take a step back and look at what has happened around the First World War and what has been delivered, I think it will have changed, probably for all of us, how we look at commemorations and how they should be handled. Certainly from our



point of view, the investment in 14-18 NOW—we put £10 million into that project—was a leap of faith to some extent because it was made at a very early stage, before detailed plans had been delivered, but it is something that we are very proud of. We are very proud of the quality of what has been delivered through that programme and the level of reach and engagement it achieved. For sure, it will encourage us to be even bolder and more ambitious in terms of the things we look at in future.

The core things that have been funded—the community programmes—line up very much with the sorts of things that we would seek to fund. As I said at the beginning, it was not that we were funding things that we would not normally have funded; it is that we were particularly asking communities to engage with the First World War and think about whether there was something in relation to that that they wanted to bring forward.

Q55 Clive Efford: Would you say that there are lessons that other lottery funders could learn from what you achieved?

Ros Kerslake: Maybe in a general sense. Each lottery funder has a different set of objectives to deliver and a different set of targets. Ours are very much about engaging communities and people in heritage. That is what we see our role as being about. Clearly, the way we set about it and the things we were trying to achieve were aimed at delivering what we see as our key priorities.

Q56 Clive Efford: What about DCMS, Lord Ashton? Are there lessons that DCMS has learnt from engaging with communities as a consequence of the 2014-2018 commemorations?

Lord Ashton: As I said before, our role was to try to be supportive. The decision that had been made at the beginning to set up 14-18 NOW and allow the Heritage Lottery Fund to do their job, which they are doing anyway, was very much to prevent it being centrally controlled. In this panel but also previously, people talked about risk. I think there was a risk because we could have been more controlling but we were not. That was, as it turned out, a tremendous benefit. As I said before, we set a skeleton but we let the thing flower, if you like.

The other thing is that this is a four-year programme and that does not happen normally. The Heritage Lottery Fund does not do four-year projects normally and nor does DCMS, though we will in the future, probably, when the Second World War centenary comes. In a sense, it was unique. The risk of letting artists go and do their thing was fantastic. There is some risk in that but it worked out again. The whole point of art, in a way, is to make you think in different ways, so we did not know how it was going to work out but we were happy to take that risk.

Q57 Clive Efford: There is a question I wanted to ask the last panel but we were running out of time and I did not get to ask it. Are we good at teaching ourselves our history? Do we get the cut-through that we



should? Do we give a proper perspective of where we are and where we have been in the world?

Dr Murrison: I think we are. I suppose that is a cue for pointing out that this was not simply one Department's effort, or indeed the effort of one particular set of cultural organisations, brilliant though I believe both were; it was cross-Government. It involved the Department for Education and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in a major way, for those last two respectively in relation to the battlefield tours programme and the school debate series, which had very considerable reach indeed one way or the other, and the latter in relation to diversity and particular programmes such as "The Unremembered", which I think was extremely important, and "Remember Together".

The answer is that there are those who would prefer a slightly more didactic, chronological version of British history. Today's world is far more thematic than that. Of course the First World War is now on the national curriculum at key stage 3, and it seems to me that it is delivered well— young people today perhaps understand this material rather better than I would have understood it when I was at school myself.

I do not think we should beat ourselves up too much about the way in which we teach history or indeed the quality of that teaching. I have been thoroughly impressed, I have to say, with the history teachers I have met, and it is important to note that a lot of our effort over the four years has been in continuing professional development around history. In fact, Anthony Seldon set up a wonderful symposium—I think it was attended by close on 2,000 teachers—in Central Methodist Hall early in the centenary. The enthusiasm for this material among teachers is incredible. One of the legacy items I am convinced we will have from this is a continuation of that enthusiasm and quality of history teaching around this period.

Ros Kerslake: If I could just add to that, I do not think we would, as an organisation, see it as an objective to teach about history. What we would see as an objective is to encourage people to find out about their own history and to do research and to learn about that. In that I think it was hugely successful and was done very well.

Dr Murrison: There has been perhaps a slight creative dynamic between academics and those who are enthusiastic about what you might call popular history in this. My firm belief as a non-historian is that people come to this material from different angles. What seems to have engaged them particularly is this human element and a lot of the polling data that we have available, from organisations such as British Future—for example, Sunder Katwala's material that I have sent on to you this morning, if you haven't seen it already—suggests that people engage with this at the personal and the parochial level. It is very often those grainy sepia photographs that really catch their imagination rather than historians talking about grand strategy and battles. They may come to that eventually and I hope they do, but you have to hook them somehow



and it does seem to me that it is names on those memorials, the intensely personal part of this history, that really engages folk.

- Q58 **Ian C. Lucas:** One of the perennial criticisms, as far as lottery and heritage is concerned, is the focus on the big institutions and the south-east. This is the lottery generally. What is a remarkable statistic is this 98% of local authorities being covered. Certainly in my own community there was a huge response and engagement with the commemorations. Our response to being overlooked as far as having the Poppies exhibition in north Wales—we were very annoyed it went to Bangor—was that we did one of our own and initiated that. What I would really like for you to take on board, Ros, is the fact that 98% of communities were reached in this project. What steps do you think we need to take to extend that more widely to future projects? I think the answer is what Andrew has just said about the personal connections, but how do we get that 98% figure year on year for lottery heritage projects?

Ros Kerslake: We do have a pretty good track record of pushing our funding out.

- Q59 **Ian C. Lucas:** What percentage would you say it is?

Ros Kerslake: I am not claiming we get 98% every year.

Ian C. Lucas: I would be interested to know what the figure is.

Ros Kerslake: I can certainly send you something to give you some sense of that. The way that we disseminate our funding is on a per capita basis. Largely, we push funding out to areas and the teams, as I have said earlier, work really hard. In fact, where we identify areas that are not being reached, that we are not engaging, we put particular effort in. In our new strategy we have slightly turned it on its head and instead of trying to push money in, which is what we were doing before, what we are going to do is work much harder on developing local capacity and trying to understand which elements are missing for people to engage in heritage in the same way.

I would absolutely endorse what Andrew has said. What worked incredibly well here was that capturing of imagination and people feeling that there was a local story. In our broader work we do not, in fact, define heritage. We have never, as an organisation, defined it. We always allow people to come and talk to us about why something is important to them and why it is part of their heritage. We do not limit or cut out any aspect of what people in the whole of the UK would consider to be important and an enormous amount of our funding on a day-to-day basis does go out in these small projects, not to do with the First World War but just on general local community projects. That is true across the UK.

There are things that have worked very well in terms of community development that we are proud of in this and I am very happy to write to you with more information about how the general spread of our funding works.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dr Murrison: Mass participation moments help this because they engage people and they realise something is going on. Lights Out, right at the very beginning of this four-year period, was incredibly important. I thought it was brilliant. Everybody could get involved with that and there was huge engagement with it right at the very beginning.

There are also big outdoor events that are free. Heaton Park in Manchester in 2016, for example, was massively successful, exposing arts and culture to those perhaps who might not normally engage with them. People are likely to go away from such things and think, "What more can I do?" I think some of the success of the grassroots projects we have seen perhaps fed off those great big events such as Heaton Park and Lights Out.

Q60 **Ian C. Lucas:** Lord Ashton, is there any work, even preparatory work, going on about the centenary of the Second World War yet?

Lord Ashton: No.

Q61 **Ian C. Lucas:** I think it would be a good idea to think about the connections between the two wars and begin a process of thinking about that, even now.

Lord Ashton: One of the issues we have dealt with, and some people have criticised, has been that the official commemorations did not go beyond 2014 to 2018. There are many events that are being supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, 14-18 NOW and other partners, including obviously the Imperial War Museum, which are continuing the story through Versailles and things like that.

To be honest, we are trying to learn the lessons from 14-18, the First World War and events like this. When we have done that and when we have a record of what we think the lessons were, as Andrew said right at the beginning, then maybe we can look forward. However, before we get to the Second World War there are quite a few other things we would be thinking about—Weimar, the recessions, and all those sorts of things. We will definitely think about it. Well, I will not, but DCMS, if it still exists, will start thinking about it long before 2039, but not just yet, I think.

Dr Murrison: What we are doing today, and what you are doing today, is part of that early planning phase. This is why we are putting quite a lot of effort into trying to work out with our partners, "Was this a success? What can we learn? What can we take forward to the future?" We need to do that because you are quite right, Ian, before you know it we will be around again and we do not want to start from square one. The Second World War brings with it a whole extra layer of complexity, as Anthony Seldon pointed out, but nevertheless some of the building blocks that we have here now must remain, including a lot of the legacy stuff. Some of that is difficult to put your finger on but we have a sense of it enduring.

I will give you a quick anecdote. I was at a village primary school in my constituency, an old Victorian classic village primary school, talking to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

some kids. They were sitting on the floor and I was standing up, as we all do giving our little pep talk, and looking at these faces looking up at me, I thought, "During the period in question your great-grandparents would probably have been in that place and you probably look very much like they did, and in another generation's time it is going to be your children sitting in that place and there is going to be some pompous politician holding forth where I am today. You will all go home and say to your parents, 'Do you know what? This bloke came around to talk to us about the centenary of the Second World War,' and they will say, 'Oh, that's a funny old thing. I remember that happening when I was a child'." There is this sense of continuity.

Of course, in a hundred years' time historians will pretty much paint the First and Second World Wars into the same box, I suspect, and call it "the great conflagration of the 20th century". I suspect historians will judge it in that light. I am very keen that one should merge into the other.

There are, of course, parts of what we have established that will endure. Projects such as Never Such Innocence, masterminded by the wonderful Lucy French, for example, I hope will continue and eventually it will merge into the centenary of the Second World War. There are plenty of these organisations that we have set up. There is Battlefield Tours, of course, which we have set up. There will come a tipping point where perhaps the interest in the battlefields of the Great War diminishes, to be replaced with interest in the battlefields of the Second World War. I think that is a natural process.

Q62 Rebecca Pow: I just want to touch on the £50 million, I think it was, that the Heritage Lottery Fund put into the whole project.

Ros Kerslake: Just under £100 million in total.

Rebecca Pow: Sorry, £100 million. Do you have any data on what you think that generated on top of that for communities? Clearly it had massive knock-on effects all over the UK. Is there any way of analysing that?

Ros Kerslake: It depends hugely on what element of that you are talking about. If you take one of the things that we invested in, probably one of the largest, which is HMS Caroline in the Titanic quarter in Belfast, that is part of a broader regeneration project. It will have leveraged direct funding and it will have also leveraged, over time, regeneration benefits, and it continues to leverage. That is a very tangible, lasting memorial to the investment that we put in. That is true of some of the other things that we put money into, such as the home of Hedd Wyn in Snowdonia, again a restoration project, on rather a smaller scale and with rather fewer visitors but one that will be important into the future.

Some of the impacts will be less tangible and harder to measure because they will be back to some of that anecdotal-type information that was mentioned earlier. I was looking through this morning and I pulled out a



quote that came from one of the projects that we gave to. It was about the role of the Sikh community in the war. Somebody said, "I had no idea about Sikh contributions in World War One and I now feel more proud to be part of this community." That is not just about somebody having better knowledge; it is about a long-term legacy of somebody's perception of their own community and their value of it.

Q63 Rebecca Pow: Talking about the money side of it, when you divvy up the money because you have to choose where to put it, do you consider that? Is that one of the considerations? I would say that has also been a very valuable service to society, that you have had a much wider impact than just the knowledge.

Ros Kerslake: Yes. When we look at the projects, it depends on the type of project that it is. If we are making a physical investment into something then one of the outcomes—and I stress "one of"—is that it has an economic impact on the area in which we are investing, but we also look at things such as, as I mentioned earlier, whether it engages more people with heritage or whether it brings the heritage itself back into better condition. There are a range of outcomes that we would look at. Economic benefit, for most of the projects that we invest in, is only one of those, and leverage in terms of investment coming in alongside it is only one of those things as well. I would argue quite strongly that when you put investment into a community it may not directly leverage economic benefit but it does over time, through community confidence and community capacity, start to generate that benefit. It is not as measurable in the way that you are talking about.

There are some projects that we invest in, called heritage enterprise projects, which are specifically around whether they create an economic impact within their own area. Then we would take a different set of criteria and would look at them. For the majority of things that we look at, we are looking at that whole range, the whole thing through from the community impact and the heritage rescued to the leverage and the economic impact. I would not say it is the key driver for most of the ones we look at.

Q64 Rebecca Pow: Andrew, I am interested in the experience you have gained from this. It strikes me that this has been a very holistic project. It has been much wider than just about the history. Do you think lessons are learnt from that? In a way, it has opened up doors. For example, using the art and culture theme may not originally, to many people, have been the obvious way of interpreting all this, but it seems to have served a brilliant purpose and unlocked many other multifarious doors.

Dr Morrison: Rebecca, you are absolutely right. I think we have achieved the goals that we set out to achieve in 2012 around our themes of remembrance, youth and education, as set out by David Cameron what seems like an age ago at the Imperial War Museum. I am comfortable with that.



What has surprised me certainly is the number of other things that have also been achieved over the four-year period of the centenary. I am thinking about the diplomatic deliverables, if you will, the closeness it has brought us to other countries and communities, some of them perhaps not the obvious ones. At the start of this perhaps we were thinking that managing the relationship with our future adversaries might be important, but in fact it has been perhaps managing the relationship with some of those with whom the United Kingdom was on the same side during this period of conflict that has been quite complex and nuanced. Dealing with that has been a bit challenging along the way but we have done so in a way that I think has brought us together. I think it has been a great diplomatic success.

Sir Anthony mentioned the fact that this is a difficult time for this country in many ways but this has been healing, commemorating shared history that can be complex and nuanced in a balanced, reflective and measured way, as I think we have done—and by that I mean the whole of the country has done. What has delighted me and perhaps confounded the cynics is the way the British public have handled this material in an exceptionally mature and thoughtful way. I have been so impressed by that. That has been revelatory to me.

We promoted an interest in history in general and not just the Great War. I think we have inculcated a sense of the importance of art and culture. It would be inconceivable that we mounted this sort of commemoration in the future without having arts and culture as an intrinsic part of the fabric. People will think, "Golly, that is a little bit odd," if we do not have that cultural wraparound.

Q65 Rebecca Pow: I will just give you an example. One of the most moving things I went to was at Queen's College School in Taunton. They devised, performed and directed their own play because they saw three names on a noticeboard of previous head boys or sports captains who had all been in World War One, who all came from the area. They decided to do some research into it, and they wrote a play around the story of those three boys. It was the most moving experience but also it enabled schoolchildren not only to learn about the history and engage with it but they actually went on the stage and acted. Some of them would not have even done acting before. What I meant by "holistic" was that you were getting people not just to learn about history but to come on the stage and do all those other things that this project seems to have brought together.

Dr Morrison: Yes, and the sense we have is that that is going to be enduring. That is part of the legacy. It is very difficult to quantify but that is a sense that we strongly have.

To come back to your question about what has surprised me, I suppose the digital contribution has surprised and delighted me. I think this is the first major event of this sort where digital is front and centre. Recording what has happened digitally, as Diane Lees particularly mentioned, is of



vital importance, which is why DCMS has given £100,000 to IWM to take the lead in this matter. Of course, a lot of the material that has been gathered during the centenary period will eventually crumble into dust. We have given it an immortality by being able to digitise it.

Lord Ashton: That project is ongoing.

Dr Murrison: I think that is something that is new in this particular piece of work. Volunteering has been a strong part of this. Again, the evidence we have is that that has established a habit of volunteering. Many of those who volunteered in this work have not really volunteered or engaged before. Those are items in which I have been pleasantly surprised in doing this work. We have achieved what we set out to achieve but there has been a whole lot more stuff as well.

Q66 **Rebecca Pow:** Just finally, I touched on war memorials in the first session; that has been people's age-old perception of remembering a war or some event. We have loads and loads of crumbling war memorials in this country and it is often difficult to make a case to get the money to restore them. I wonder if now, as a result of this project, the Heritage Lottery Fund would look more favourably on money for war memorials such as the Wellington Monument, if you have these other projects working all around them so that you bring them to life in a much bigger way. Are there any lessons to be learnt there, do you think, Ros?

Ros Kerslake: That is what we have always said to people. For us, it is not enough that people focus on the physical thing; it has to be about how it engages with the local people. It has to be about how it brings people in. The examples that Andrew gave, and indeed the one that you quoted of the school, are fantastic examples of the sort of thing we do look for in the projects that we are involved in. As always, we are open to all projects and we are open to people talking to us about things that they want to achieve, but we do ask them to ensure that they deliver the outcomes that we want to see come from our investment in a project.

Dr Murrison: The number of memorials that have been restored during this centenary period has been truly impressive, and not just restored but discovered—I think a couple thousand memorials of various sorts that had been lost have been found. It has encouraged a lot of volunteering and a lot of workshops around how to do this quite sensitive work. As you go around the country, bear in mind that war memorials are not just bits of stone but very often, in villages particularly, are the heart of the community. They are the centre point of the community and they are very important in terms of one's sense of place. So many of those have been given a new lease of life—let us hope for another 100 years—in the course of this centenary period.

Q67 **Giles Watling:** One of the things that has been so impressive locally—you talked about international communities—is our community in Clacton and how this has reached people and brought people together. For instance, at the annual remembrance service the attendance has gone up



HOUSE OF COMMONS

many-fold over the past four or five years. There was a local group who got together and rebuilt a World War One tank to celebrate Cambrai and so forth. We have created something really special here that we must not let go. It is a while until we get to 2039 and we start thinking about World War Two. There have to be other projects that will still reach out to our local communities.

I absolutely take your point, Lord Ashton, and applaud it, that we as politicians must not get involved in artistic decisions. It is a very difficult one to let go of money and not want control but "Let the artists have their head" is one appeal I get. For instance, in Clacton we want to promote our 1950s and 1960s seaside legacy. That is the sort of project that we want to get people coalescing around now for the future. We have done so much and this has created so much in our local communities, I do not want it to go now. What do you think we should do to promote that sort of community ethos that has come together over these last four or five years?

Dr Murrison: I think it is happening. I am thinking of "We're Here Because We're Here", for example, which you have heard about already. The National Theatre and the Birmingham Rep established links with regional theatre companies in the course of that work that we are told are enduring. They will go on.

As somebody whose training is in the sciences rather than the arts, part of the frustration I have had in dealing with this piece of work is that quite a lot of it does appear to be ephemeral. You are inculcating a sense within people of the history of the period, of art and culture, of volunteering, and it is difficult to put that on any sort of balance sheet in a formal reckoning. You just have this sense that it is enduring. Certainly the evidence we have to date—and this is an ongoing process at this stage—is that people have been volunteering for the first time and they have continued to volunteer. I am hopeful that we will have built this habit of volunteering in the course of this work, which is why I have said it is one of the surprising things for me that has come out of this particular four-year period.

Lord Ashton: When we talk about ephemeral art events and things, it was mentioned before that this is the first digital commemoration and there are hundreds of examples of where we will still have a digital legacy. The Imperial War Museum is making that available to local organisations so that they can maintain them and keep them. People can find out and can remember, for years now, in a way that they could not before. When we come to the Second World War we will use the digital environment in a way that we have not even conceived of and it is very exciting. It can bring things home. The obvious example is the Peter Jackson film, these masses of First World War black and white film that can be brought to life. There are plenty of things that will still be around for many years, thanks to that.



Dr Murrison: At a slightly more academic level, we have the wonderful centenary partnership, which involved 4,000 organisations in 60 countries. That is now evolving, thanks to Arts Council England, into a specialist subject network. Those kinds of things, at that level, will, I think, endure and ultimately inform the transition into the centenary of the Second World War.

Q68 **Giles Watling:** I get that. I just want to make the point that in Tendring, in my area, we are culturally deprived. We do have theatre groups who get involved. I do not want it to be, "We are here today, we have walked away and we are going to leave you alone again". It has done so much good and I do not want us to get left behind. I want, for instance, the Heritage Fund to think in terms of looking at our areas and not just the big conurbations.

Ros Kerslake: We absolutely do that. We focus across the whole of the UK and we work hard to ensure that we get to areas outside the major conurbations. One of the things we talked about earlier, or I was talking about earlier, is that the challenge often is about capacity and that is why things do not happen in a local area. The great thing about having people engage for the first time, building that energy and building that enthusiasm, is that they are then much more likely to go on and do something else. They are much more likely to come back and talk to us about other projects and other things they want to take forward once you have them engaged. We are very excited about the fact that for so many of the people who got engaged with this, it was their first time. Once you have that energy and enthusiasm built up, I think we will see a lasting legacy from it.

Q69 **Giles Watling:** We must not lose the momentum.

Ros Kerslake: We must not.

Q70 **Chair:** Thank you. I think that concludes the questions from the panel.

Lord Ashton: I would just like to pay tribute to the officials in DCMS who worked the whole way through this programme. Some of them are here today. They have done a tremendous job for the country, not only all around the UK but also a lot of the events were abroad. They showed some diplomacy when required but definitely enthusiasm the whole way through and I think they deserve a lot of credit.

Chair: That is great. Thank you very much for that. Thank you for your evidence.