



PRESS RELEASE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

Imperial War Museums announce Battle of the Somme Programme

Major exhibition and event at IWM London, and an extensive programme of nationwide film screenings form Imperial War Museums' commemorative programme to mark hundred years since the Battle of the Somme.

The Imperial War Museum was established while the First World War was still being fought to ensure that future generations understood the causes and consequences of the war and to remember the men, women and children who played a role. This year continuing in this mission IWM will be:

- Opening a new major exhibition ***Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies*** at IWM London, exploring how film-makers have found inspiration in compelling personal stories and gripping real events from wars of the past century.
- Holding a free, special commemorative event – ***Night Before the Somme*** – at IWM London on 30 June, following the official ceremony at Westminster Abbey.
- Working with the **First World War Centenary Partnership** to present the UNESCO-listed film *The Battle of the Somme* to a national and international audience.
- Supporting **Somme100 FILM**, as they aim to deliver 100 live orchestral performances of Laura Rossi's score alongside screenings of the film.
- Remembering those who lived, died fought and survived on the digital memorial ***Lives of the First World War***
- Providing an extensive education programme of tours and talks at IWM North

Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies

IWM London

1 July 2016 – 8 January 2017

On 1 July 2016, IWM London opens *Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies*, a new major exhibition that goes behind the scenes of some of this century's iconic war films that have captured the imagination of cinema-going audiences across the generations.

In the 100th anniversary year of the release of *The Battle of the Somme* film, this immersive new exhibition explores how film-makers have found inspiration in compelling personal stories and gripping real events from wars of the past century.

Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies will bring together for the first time a unique combination of film clips, costumes, props, scripts, sketches and designs, alongside original archival material and artefacts from IWM's collections. Accompanied by immersive audio-visual installations, the exhibition will explore the film-making process and how war movies have shaped popular perception of conflicts.

Night Before the Somme

IWM London

30 June 2016, 8pm – Midnight

On 30 June, IWM London will be holding a free late-night opening filled with music, art and poetry to reflect upon the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. There will be a number of artistic performances and experiences for visitors in and around the museum, inspired by the themes of love, fear, hope and courage.

Visitors will also have a chance to watch *The Battle of the Somme* film, hear from our experts in a series of Q & As, and preview our major exhibition *Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies*.

Nationwide Screenings of *The Battle of the Somme* film

Shot and screened in 1916, the film *The Battle of the Somme* was the first feature length documentary about war, and changed the way both cinema and the public perceived film. In the year of its release it was watched by around 20 million people – almost half the population of Britain at the time – many hoping to see the image of a loved-one, or friend captured on film.

One hundred years later, IWM are sharing this unique UNESCO listed film with the world through a programme of screenings by members of the First World War Centenary Partnership. To date 210 organisations are screening this – 126 organisations in the United Kingdom and 84 overseas. Screening Partners range from the Salford Museum and Art Gallery through to the Ulster Museum, Dover Castle, The Corn Exchange and Deutsches Filmmuseum, in Frankfurt Germany.

Full details of screenings can be found at www.1914.org

Live Orchestral Performances by Somme100 FILM

Somme100 FILM is an international project, working with IWM as part of the First World War Centenary Partnership, to mark the anniversary by screening the film alongside live performances of contemporary composer Laura Rossi's acclaimed score.

The ambition is to present 100 orchestral performances. To date over 50 orchestras have signed up to perform as part of Somme100 FILM and the project is encouraging many more orchestras to participate at www.somme100film.com/.

A special performance will take place to mark the end of the Battle on 18 November, at the Royal Festival Hall, London with the score performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by John Gibbons.

Other performances announced today include those at Manchester Cathedral, Jersey Opera House, Christchurch in Spitalfields, Queens Park School in Chester, Falkirk Town Hall and a performance by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Lives of the First World War

IWM continues to invite members of the public to discover, remember and share stories of those who lived, died, fought and survived the Battle of the Somme on the permanent digital memorial *Lives of the First World War* – www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org

Over the centenary, IWM will continue to tell the stories of people from the time, including from Captain 'Billie' Nevill who kicked a football into no man's land to rally his troops, and nurse Dorothy Field who worked solidly from 1 – 13 July in a field hospital treating convoys of wounded men coming from the front line.

Since its launch in 2014, over 87,600 people have contributed to Lives of the First World War, remembering over 7.6 million life stories from the duration of the First World War and creating 3,200 Communities - including more than 70 Communities that have links to the Battle of the Somme.

IWM North

IWM North will host a series of tours and events throughout the summer and up to November 2016. These include 'Closer Look' tours highlighting key objects and personal stories and 'In Focus' sessions which will explore the Somme using film, sound archive clips, related object handling and personal stories. There will also be talks on individual's life stories gleaned from Lives of the First World War including sports people, non-combatants and famous names.

Find our more at www.iwm.org.uk/somme; #Somme100

Ends

For more information please contact the IWM press office on press@iwm.org.uk; 020 7416 5365

Notes to Editors

About the First World War Centenary Partnership

IWM is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of 3,568 local, regional and international cultural and educational organisations from 58 countries. Together, the Partnership is presenting a vibrant programme of cultural events, activities and digital platforms, enabling millions of people across the world to discover more about life in the First World War.

IWM established the First World War Centenary Partnership in 2010. The founding ambition for the Partnership was that its members would collectively organise and present a vibrant, diverse and far-reaching programme to reflect how people want to remember, commemorate and debate the conflict in their own communities, in a way that is meaningful for them.

Since 2013, The First World War Centenary Partnership have presented 4,454 events across the world – 4,187 of these in the UK and 267 overseas

First World War Centenary Partnership activities can be found at www.1914.org

About Somme100 FILM

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Laura Rossi's score was commissioned to mark the 90th anniversary of The Battle of the Somme. The re-mastered film was screened for the 90th anniversary of the Battle to a full house at the Queen Elizabeth Hall with the premiere of Laura's orchestral score, performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra and received a 5 star review in The Times.

"And these troops in the mud grinned or stared at us to a new music score by Laura Rossi, brilliantly effective, played with typical dexterity and polish." Geoff Brown, The Times. *****

About Laura Rossi - Biography

Laura Rossi has written music extensively for film and television, including the critically acclaimed London to Brighton, The Eichmann Show, starring Martin Freeman and Anthony LaPaglia and Song for Marion, starring Vanessa Redgrave and Terence Stamp.

She has also scored many silent films including the British Film Institute's Silent Shakespeare and the famous IWM 1916 films The Battle of the Somme and The Battle of the Ancre. Her latest work Voices of Remembrance is a choral/ orchestral work featuring war poems read by Ralph Fiennes and Vanessa Redgrave. The music was commissioned by Boosey and Hawkes to mark the Centenary of the First World War.

Laura's music has been recorded and performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Music Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra and the BBC Concert Orchestra. Her works have been performed at the Barbican, the Royal Festival Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. Laura is also lecturer for film music at the London Film Academy. For more information please visit Laura's website: <http://www.laurarossi.com/>

Other First World War Centenary Activity:

▪ **Battle of Jutland**

IWM are working in collaboration with the National Museum of the Royal Navy on their exhibition – Hours: Jutland 1916, The Battle that won the War. Over a third of the objects going on display in this exhibition come from IWM's rich collections. It will feature objects including guns from British and German ships, battle ensigns stained with smoke and the personal effects of the men and women involved.

IWM will feature in two documentaries exploring the Battle, as well as other national TV programmes. IWM are also commemorating the stories of those who lived through the battle on the permanent, digital memorial Lives of the First World War - and members of the public can discover, remember and share the stories of the men who endured The Battle of Jutland.

- **Easter Rising**

To mark the centenary of the Easter Rising in Ireland, IWM is loaning various items from its collections for major exhibitions at museums across Northern Ireland and Ireland (namely National Museum of Ireland for the Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising Exhibition; National Museum of Northern Ireland and the Remembering 1916; Your Stories; Kerry County Museum and an exhibition telling the story of Roger Casement. IWM will also be sharing a rare film from its collections.

IWM and Film

IWM has managed a Film Archive since it was established as an institution, and the film collection now covers all aspects of conflicts in which British, Commonwealth or former Empire countries have been involved since the start of the twentieth century.

Our constantly growing collection now extends to over 23,000 hours of moving images, representing a wide and diverse range of material from public and service information films, documentaries and unedited combat film, through to official newsreels and amateur films.

IWM London

IWM London - IWM's flagship branch - tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Visit our brand new First World War Galleries featuring over 1,300 objects from IWM's collections, explore what life was like at home during the Second World War in [A Family in Wartime](#); delve into the world of espionage in [Secret War](#); visit our award-winning [Holocaust Exhibition](#); discover stories of bravery in [The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes](#); see work by some of Britain's most significant 20th Century artists in our [art galleries](#) or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions.

Open daily from 10am – 6pm (except 24 - 26 December)

IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ.

T: 020 7416 5000 E: mail@iwm.org.uk

iwm.org.uk / @I_W_M / www.facebook.com/iwm.london

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches which attract over 2 million visitors each year are **IWM London**, IWM's flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; **IWM North**, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; **IWM Duxford**, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the world. Next year is the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. IWM will be announcing its programme to mark the anniversary later this year. For more information visit www.1914.org.