Summerstown 182

Evaluation
Introduction

The project began as a simple First World War research exercise, finding out some information and stories about the 182 names on a local memorial at St Mary’s church, Tooting, South London and through the Heritage Lottery Funding it developed into a much broader-based community history initiative involving many local people, schools and various groups and charities.

Our achievements include;

- the extensive promotion of local knowledge about the First World War - through a website, Friends meetings, blog, talks, guided walks and special events
- establishing a dedicated support team of contributors; researchers, artists, musicians, genealogists, historians, film-makers, local volunteers
- supporting the council’s heritage service through extensive involvement in the Wandsworth Heritage Festival and participation in Heritage Wandsworth meetings
- initiating the placement of three local heritage plaques and associated unveiling events; Hazelhurst Road V2, Sidney Lewis and Robert Sadler’s Victorian Running Grounds
- connecting with cross-community groups through participation in Broadwater Road Fun Day, Hazelfest, Wandle Fortnight, local heritage fairs
- initiating the hosting of a major exhibition at St George’s Hospital about the South Asian contribution in the First World War
- working extensively with local schools; Ernest Bevin College, Burntwood, Earlsfield, Sellincourt, Smallwood, Dunraven
- raising awareness of local history and heritage among the local business community
- promoting our activities to a wider audience in neighbouring boroughs through involvement in such events as Merton Discovery Day and Lambeth Local History Fair
- stimulating historical interest and volunteer involvement from a wide range of people from different backgrounds
- strong social media presence and excellent relationship with local communication channels such as Tooting PRSS, Wandsworth Radio
- representing this area’s heritage overseas through participation and collaboration with such organisations as the Last Post Association and Friends of Flanders Fields Museum
- our work has been recognized with a Tooting Community Heroes Award and a Wandsworth Borough Council Civic Award.
The Summerstown 182 Launch

The Launch was held at St Mary’s Church in Tooting in South London on 24th September 2016 and was attended by the local community and Wandsworth Lord Mayor, Chelsea Pensioners, relatives of the 182 and members of local historical societies. The launch was held in conjunction with an unveiling of a plaque of the youngest soldier to serve in the First World War in the country- Sidney Lewis – in a neighbouring street where he had lived. After a speech given by the heritage coordinator Geoff Simmons, and the unveiling of the plaque by Sid’s son, there was music specially commissioned and played by Tracy McRory to commemorate the occasion. The people who attended the unveiling then went to St Mary’s Church for the launch the Summerstown 182 Project. The Unveiling of Sid’s plaque can be viewed on https://youtu.be/K5TrMTiYo7Q

At the Launch The Heritage co-ordinator and vicar of St Mary’s made a welcome speech and outlined the forthcoming activities which were available in the programme of events for the coming year. There was a WW1 postcard making activity led by the Art coordinator and a display of WW1 artifacts with a volunteer expert. We signed up volunteers for the Friends of 182 and we took a group on the first 182 walk.

Working with Schools

The Summerstown 182 Project ran WW1 history projects with two schools – Smallwood Primary School and Burntwood Secondary School. At Smallwood School the pupils learnt about the local history by attending a walk in the surrounding area. Their learning was interpreted in to the making of the 182 maps with illustrations.
We organized a memorial for one of the 182 soldiers, William Mace, who was buried in an unmarked grave in the local cemetery. Ernest Bevan School and Smallwood attended the commemoration. The pupils from Smallwood made daffodils and wrote messages on labels to William Mace and other soldiers which we hung in the tree in the spot where he was buried. The film can be viewed on [https://youtu.be/9u3cReEnipo](https://youtu.be/9u3cReEnipo)

Smallwood school carried out a survey with the 28 pupils who took place in the workshop.

Analysis of findings (data collected from interviews held with all 28 children from the project).

1) Attitudes to history before and after study

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<th>Children's attitude to history before the project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interested in history</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not particularly interested in history</td>
<td>20</td>
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The project has clearly changed the profile of History, as a subject amongst our pupils. One child reflected, ‘Before I thought history wasn’t that interesting but now I can see that it is exciting’. Two children shared their enjoyment of learning about History in a ‘creative’ way. Several of the children described the project as ‘fun’. One child said they enjoyed that there was things that they could go and look at in the present that taught them about things from the past.

2) How the project has contributed to the pupils’ learning

Every single child that was interviewed could talk about the new things that they had learned, including children from the Language Unit; highlighting how accessible the learning was. Children mostly reported on the people they had learned about; specifically William Mace and Tiny Ted. Some of the children referred to the artistic aspects of the project, such as rubbings and making flowers for the memorial.

3) Wider learning

At Smallwood, we always aim to engage children in their learning to such a degree that it impacts on their wider learning, including learning that they choose to do at home. That is why we were really pleased to learn that several children had chosen to learn more about the project at home. Some children decided to learn more about people that they had been finding out about; William Mace was mentioned a lot. One child commented that the project had led them to notice a blue plaque near to their home. They then carried out research into this. Perhaps, the most charming response to this question of home learning was from a child who commented, ‘the project has made me notice more when I am walking around. I was out at the weekend and I noticed a really old car. I didn’t notice stuff like that before the project’.
4) What children would like to after this project

We asked the children what they would do after the project. Several children were sad to learn that this project was coming to an end and asked if we could continue it. Many children said that they intended to continue to practise the skills that they had developed throughout the project. One child did say that this project had inspired him to become a historian when he’s older. However, this is only if he can juggle it with his other ambition, which is to become the leader of a country.

At Burntwood School we worked with Year 9 (aged 13/14) pupils. We took two groups of pupils on a 182 fact finding walk in the area and once back in the classroom they were divided in to two groups to create the 182 Timeline and to make short films from a selection of stories from the 182 memorial.

The Timeline, facilitated by the Art co-ordinator, was created from the knowledge gained from the 182 walk as well as the research that the young people had carried out about World War One. A rubbing was taken of the memorial, which forms the centrepiece of the Timeline with every one of the 182’s name written on a label surrounding it. There is also a montage of images and text including photos of some of the 182, poems, handmade poppies, recruitment leaflets, postcards, letters and documents.

“The Timeline was beautifully constructed and really brought to life the impact of the war on those who served in our community as well as those that stayed behind.” Sheila

The short films made by the pupils were of three significant stories from the 182 names on the memorial.

The first was the story of 19 year old Arthur Pickworth who was the only commissioned officer among the 182 names. He was killed in the fighting at Messines on 28th September 1918, just six weeks before the Armistice, as the allies drove the Germans back through Belgium [https://youtu.be/G7PNRjMlzal](https://youtu.be/G7PNRjMlzal)
The second story was focused on the Anglo American laundry where many of the girls and women worked in the 182 area. We thought it was important to tell the story of women’s lives 100 years ago and especially poignant as the girls who worked in the laundry were a similar age to our participants as school leaving age was 12 years old at that time. [https://youtu.be/iqew1Hpt1zc](https://youtu.be/iqew1Hpt1zc)

The third story was of Albert and his brother David Clarke and the Corner Pin pub. Albert was courting Daisy who worked in the Corner Pin pub but he was killed in the war. As part of the film we reconstructed (in black and white silent movie style) with the students, the moment when David told Daisy her sweetheart had died. David then went on to marry Daisy [https://youtu.be/XLO9L62NvN0](https://youtu.be/XLO9L62NvN0)

Feedback from Burntwood pupils

Georgia “During this project I learnt that the war effected people who weren’t even in the fighting including families and friends. I learnt how many people lost their husbands and family members.”

Nadijah “It was interesting to see how the 182 people were connected and I enjoyed doing the research on the stories for the filming”

Ishbel “I was surprised that girls as young as 12 worked in the laundry and it makes me appreciate my life more”.

Charles Harper – Deputy Principal Emeritus Burntwood school “Each name on the memorial has a story and each story is different. The pupils have responded well by taking part in the project. They have had an experience that they would not have had from the curriculum. It’s interesting that every parish has a war memorial and this project has made me realise how much the country as whole lost many lives.”
The Walks

“I attended several Summerstown 182 walks over the last year and went to two local plaque unveilings - for Ted Foster and Robert Sadler. Apart from the fascinating stories that throw a light on those who lived in this area a hundred years ago, one of the best things about the 182 project has been how the 182 team engaged and brought together the local community, by fostering a sense of identity among people who live around here today and connecting them with the area's history” Kath Church Co-Chair Friends of Streatham Cemetery

The Walks were a significant part of the project as the 182 lived in the area that the project covered. The first walk took place at the Launch and then subsequently was part of the learning in the school projects and a way to engage with everyone in the community and to increase understanding and awareness of the period.

We broadened our existing Summerstown182 Walks to highlight the role of women and the industrial heritage of this area, including the role of the local hospital and River Wandle.

“I thought it was really interesting to learn about the role women took during WW1. It was hard times for them working and looking after their families. Walking round the streets where they lived really brought it home to me.” Avril

The Library Roadshows

We organised two library-based WW1 history roadshows to help people learn about their family’s role in the war and to identify artifacts by our volunteer expert in WW1 military. The Tooting Library Roadshow was part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival. The Roadshow enabled people to come in off the street to have a cup of tea and chat to the project organisers about their own relatives who fought in the war. Many of the older generation do not have access to computers and so with our genealogy experts were able to trace relatives through the ancestry sites ancestry.com and findmypast.com.
“It was good finding about my great uncle who was killed in the WW1 because my family didn’t know much about what happened.” Brenda. “I brought along an original postcard that my grandfather sent to my grandmother and showed it to some young people who were attending the Roadshow. They were amazed that it was 100 years old.” Martha.

Archive Visits

“One of the most enjoyable opportunities that the project arranged were two group visits to the Metropolitan Archives in London and the Records Office at Kew. On both occasions we were given specialist ‘behind the scenes’ tours that would not normally be available to the general researcher. We were encouraged and helped to get own reader’s cards so when we go back to each place, we could easily access the library and books for ourselves. At Kew we were given an interesting talk about researching WW1 records and handed leaflets to show what documents were available that would most help us, also we were taught how to handle original material such as old maps and documents that were often so fragile. At the Metropolitan Archives, we had access to the original plans and drawings of our local area of Summerstown, this gave us a greater understanding of how the St Mary’s church became the centre of the community as the new houses, roads and shops sprung up around it.” Marion Bower 182 volunteer genealogist.

Friends of 182

We established a Friends of Summerstown182 history group and guests speakers gave talks on specialized subjects such as the Asian impact on the WW1, oral history techniques and developing Genealogical and research skills.

The curator of ‘Far From the Western Front’ gave a talk about the South Asian contribution to the First World War. We helped to instigate the hosting of their exhibition throughout September at St George’s Hospital and supported it with two history walks.

The Oral history workshop was one of our most popular 182 Friends meetings and was well attended by all ages. “I brought
my 18 year old son to the workshop and we both found it really interesting and informative. I am hoping to record some stories from my parishioners so will be definitely using the listening and open-ended questions techniques”

Vicar of St Stephens, Earlsfield

The Celebration of the Summerstown 182 Project

The Celebration took place on Saturday 16th September 2017 and was attended by the local community, relatives of the 182 and the groups that we had worked with. We screened the films that the Burntwood pupils made and the 182 Timeline and 182 Map was on display. We ran 2 workshops commemorating the 182. One was planting poppy seeds in honour of the 182. A name would be picked, seeds planted in a small pot and then people could take them home to plant at a later date. Smallwood School planted their pots in the grounds of the school on Friday 10th November for Remembrance Day.

Pebbles were decorated with a 182 name and placed by the memorial. They will also be placed on the war graves when members of the Friends of 182 visit the graves in France and Belgium.
The Legacy of the Summerstown 182

“I have been on four of the walks led by Geoff Simmons (Walking in a Wandle Wonderland, Waterloo Sunset, Industry in Garratt Lane and one on Ted Foster). Also I have been to talks on St George’s Hospital and on the Asian community’s contribution to WW1 (related to an exhibition). In addition there was a visit to Brookwood Military Cemetery. All of the events were very informative, well presented and I learned something from all of them.

The Summerstown 182 website as also been excellent: the biographies of the men remembered and the contributions from their descendants have been fascinating to read. The whole project, including arranging for plaques to be put up with more to follow, and interaction with local schools, has been and will continue to be a fantastic asset for Tooting” Cheryl Slater

“I attended one Summerstown 182 event, the visit to the Chattri war memorial near Brighton this summer. This was an enjoyable, well organised visit that made the Sikh contribution to the army in WW1 come alive, and illustrated how much it means to today’s Sikh community, who were there in force. It’s difficult to think of any other way I could have learnt about this neglected pocket of history and its resonance in contemporary life.

Beyond the specific events, Summerstown 182 adds to the texture of community life in Tooting. Through illuminating the past, it reinforces people’s sense of Tooting’s identity and their pride in it. This is down to its programme of imaginative, varied events that go well beyond ‘history’ as usually understood, but perhaps even more to its ethos of engagement with all local players, and an open, enquiring cast of mind. Summerstown 182 is also a brilliant user of visual media ie its website, flyers and tweets.

I’ve much appreciated the way Summerstown 182 has worked with the Balham and Tooting Community Association (BATCA), of which I’m secretary, coming to our meetings and bringing a magnificent stand to our Fun Day last year. I believe Summerstown 182 has benefited too, showing how productive cooperation between community groups can be”. Kate

“I do have a good knowledge of local history but I feel the Summerstown project has encouraged me to expand into looking at wider sources of primary material, rather than use what is already known. For example, I have been encouraged since the start of the project to visit the Imperial War Museum in London to see original letters that one the 182 soldiers wrote back to his family shortly before his death. I was able to read his own words in pencil to his sister asking after her and looked a later photograph of his parents visiting his graveside in France.
Something that will always stay with me.”  

Marion Gower volunteer 
Genealogist

“It was a dream for me to able to devote so much time to spreading historical knowledge of the First World War in this area. Particularly relevant was increasing knowledge and understanding of the contribution of overseas soldiers to the conflict and the very diverse community in this area greatly appreciated the efforts that were made to include that in the project. I am sure that it has stimulated a lot of interest in the effects of the First World War and history in general as reflected by the fact that 200 people attended a Tooting History Tour in September. The project has appealed to all ages, brought people together in a shared search for knowledge and understanding and left a lasting impact and legacy for future historians. The value of the project was recognised by Wandsworth Borough Council when one of our volunteers was given a Civic Award for her First World War heritage work.” Geoff Simmons 182 Heritage Co-ordinator

“Firstly, it enabled me to discover the resting place of my Great Uncle (who is on St. Mary's memorial), and consequently to visit. That was important to me. Through Geoff's walks/talks, I learned more about the local area and the wider community in which the men /families lived. I was privileged and pleased to be included in a small group trip to France/Belgium - attended service at Menin Gate, Ypres. Laid flowers (from local Sikh community) at Hollebeke Sikh memorial. Visited various cemeteries /graves of '182' men. And much more... A moving and interesting experience. Geoff's walks/talks, and his written 'stories' have brought these names 'to life'- these were 'real 'men who lived, worked, had families in this small community. Now, not just names and dates on a wall memorial". Teresa Belliot

“The launch/celebration events attracted interest from those who wouldn’t normally list local history as an interest. People were moved by the stories shared and for some it made them look past the statistics about WW1 and think of the individuals and their families, and remember the affect war had and still has on communities. “ Peggy Shimmin 182 Media Co-ordinator

“Working with the schools and involving the diverse local community really enthused and inspired the young people's imaginations and enabled them to identify with the past in a very personal way enabling them to create
fantastic visual interpretations and outcomes from their heritage learning experience. Another important element, particularly for the Burntwood girls, was looking at the role of women in WW1 through propaganda, poetry and women's role in the war effort and workplace.” *Judith Lawton – 182 Art coordinator*

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