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Review of the Marking Centenaries period and future challenges: Understanding our Past, Shaping Our Future

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Review of the Marking Centenaries period and future challenges

Understanding Our Past,
Shaping Our Future

Community Relations Council



heritage
lottery fund



Foreward

In 2011 the title 'Remember the Future' was chosen for the joint Community Relations Council and Heritage Lottery Fund conference which heralded an initiative on the Decade of Centenaries covering the ten-year period from 2012. The use of those words developed from a recognition that the way in which the past is remembered is a marker for the health of any society now. This is particularly the case in a divided society like Northern Ireland. In addition, the phrase implicitly recognised that a focus on a past, which offers nothing for the future, could be disastrous. The challenge was posed in the question: what can be learnt from that period 100 years ago, which saw war, revolution and the partition of Ireland? A period which still exerts a strong hold on how the people of Northern Ireland see themselves today.

Over the last six years of the Decade a lot has happened. But what has not happened is a glorification of a troubled time, or community violence spawned by

commemoration. Communities have been able to engage with the period through various initiatives and activities. Events and exhibitions have happened throughout Northern Ireland helping to mark the various anniversaries in a thoughtful and informative way that has not replicated the tensions of the times they were exploring. The period has been one of genuine learning and understanding. Perhaps we are now able to learn from our past? The Decade of Centenaries initiative, jointly lead by the Community Relations Council and Heritage Lottery Fund, has been pleased to play a part in developing the projects and resources that have assisted our growing understanding. It has also been remarkable to see the way in which parts of our history that were forgotten have been retrieved at family, local community and regional levels. The work has been taken forward with enthusiasm by so many people.

However, the decade is not over. There are further dates of significance that lie ahead commemorating events that could play to the hand of division, sectarianism or identity battles. Those dates will provide significant challenges to our society. If the work of the last few years continues, they will also provide opportunities for exploration, increased understanding and the emergence of new more complicated stories and identities.

This document aims to draw together much of the learning from the last number of years, to deepen that understanding, and hopefully point a way forward for the future. The Community Relations Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the many others that have brought their knowledge and creativity to this work are committed to continuing on the journey, and as we do so, to co-creating a diverse and inclusive future.

Paul Mullan Heritage Lottery Fund

Jacqueline Irwin Community Relations Council

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Produced by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (CRC) and Heritage Lottery Fund. CRC aims to promote a pluralist society characterised by equity, respect for diversity, and recognition of interdependence. HLF is the UK's largest funder of heritage projects. In Northern Ireland HLF have awarded over £228m to over 1,300 projects. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the CRC.

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Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the three *Reflection and Years Ahead* events was to share the learning arising from our exploration of the first half of the decade of centenaries and to think about the challenges ahead and how we approach them. Over the last number of years, we have explored and perhaps remembered the centenaries in a respectful way. We have also sought to place these anniversaries in the broader political, social and economic context, the rise of Labour, the position of women and the movement for male and female suffrage.

Through exploring the decade of centenaries there is growing sense of increased understanding of this complex period of our history. It has become more complicated. In doing so there has been growing interest in connecting people and communities to their history and sense of identity. We can but acknowledge the resilience of our people as they faced tremendous upheaval, violence and change. As before commemoration is about acknowledgement rather than celebration. We hope that the longer terms outcomes will be increased understanding of the interconnected nature of the events that shaped modern Ireland and Northern Ireland and reconciliation.

How we mark, or commemorate, the centenary events in the years to 2023 will be complicated and involve us in difficult conversations. The centenaries ahead are arguably the most challenging. There are not two histories but multi-layered and complex narratives and we invite people to open themselves up to history and see what they find.

The anniversaries include the continuation and then the end of the First World War, continued turmoil in Europe, the War of Independence or Anglo Irish War, Civil War, the Irish Convention, violence, the extension of suffrage and the foundation of both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland.

As we continue to explore the decade of centenaries, we can add the international dimension and consider its relevance. Thus, the Russian Revolution, the fall of Empires and the consequences for the people of Europe and the Middle East, the Paris Peace Conference was viewed with a local and contemporary lens. We can think about it ethically. Borders, identities, citizens and migration issues emerge strongly again in the Brexit context.

One of the challenges of the forthcoming centenaries is that every place and community has a story. However, these stories are largely hidden or almost forgotten. This was a very difficult time of upheaval, loss, pain and also of new possibilities for people living along the border and throughout what became the Irish Free State and then Northern Ireland. They may still have the capacity to “prick and hurt” us.

We can also explore how much life has changed over the last 100 years and in doing so remind ourselves that people connect with human stories, with real lives. We can consider the factors political, social and economic, the position of women and labour whilst recognising militaristic and statist elements.

The ethic of non-violence and alternatives to violence explored at the time are critical to our understanding. We can draw on these narratives to think about commemorating inclusively.



Principles for Remembering in Public Sector

CRC and HLF continue to convene the Decade Roundtable which meets quarterly. It is non-executive non-decision making group of departmental, agency, academic cultural non-governmental organisations and stakeholders who come together to share information and perspectives. During 2017, we reviewed the principles and the CRC HLF principles remain unchanged.

1: Start from the historical **facts**;

2: Recognise the **implications** and **consequences** of what happened;

3: Understand that different **perceptions** and **interpretations** exist; and

4: Show how events and activities can deepen **understanding** of the period.

5: All to be seen in the context of an 'inclusive and accepting society'

The Decade Roundtable members reflected on these principles and their usefulness.

They suggest that in the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries and beyond, these principles will

continue to underpin programmes and projects, which will be no less challenging than what has already been undertaken thus far. It will be equally important that we are forward looking in how we remember, underlining the importance of continuing to unearth the complexities of our history. This will enable us to take on board new research, and continue to reflect critically on different interpretations of these momentous events in our shared history.

In order to provide information and support engagement, provide support and promote collaboration the following resources were developed by CRC and HLF working with partner organisations:

- *Remembering the Future* Conference Belfast City Hall
- *Remembering the Future Discussion Paper* (2011)
- *Remembering the Future* publication (post conference publication encapsulating discussion panels and key notes commentators and political panel) (2011).

- *Remembering the Future lecture series* on line with 11 sessions / 25 eminent historians chaired by Dr Eamon Phoenix (March to June 2012).
- Youth Engagement and Decade of anniversaries seminar (academic/NGO conflict/education groups (2013) followed by UU developed KS3 Teachers resource
- *Decade of Anniversaries Toolkit – 24 case studies and “Lessons and Tips for Ethical Commemoration”* (2013)
- *Remembering 1916 – the context and how commemorated in the past* (2014)
- Creative Centenaries Resources Fairs
- *'It's a long way to Dublin and the Somme: recovering forgotten histories, building the future'* (Titanic Belfast March 5th 2015)
- *1916 What's it all about? -* (October 2015)



Challenges of the Years Ahead

Section 1

Challenges of the Years Ahead

Dr Alan McCully

The four presentations provide thoughtful insights into the state of play so far in regard to remembering and commemorating the Decade of Centenaries. Each comes from a different academic or practitioner perspective but there are common threads running through them.

Above all, there is a common focus on the contemporary implications of how we remember and commemorate- the 'now and the future' should be the chief concern as argued by Crooke rather than simply the untangling of the past. McMaster, Crooke and Hetherington each envision a better more cohesive Northern Ireland emerging in the years following 2022, one characterised by commitment to 'the common good', stronger democratic structures and a rejection of violence as a way of political advancement. The presenters are keen to acknowledge the progress which has been made in the first half of the decade in opening up the centenary events to public scrutiny and encouraging a re-imagining of their significance. From that comes a sense of optimism associated with the positive potential of public remembering. However, there is also caution linked to the learning from the Decade to date. For example, McMaster emphasises maintaining critical awareness, Crooke the dangers of allowing fear to block deeper learning and Hetherington the importance of underpinning remembering with ethical values. This caution is expressed in the awareness that the second half of the decade may present new challenges.

If it has been so far so good in relation to the decade then the presenters flag factors which may require particular attention. Many of the events which have fallen in the Decade so far have been iconic ones such as Ulster Day, the Easter Rising and the Somme, which already have had a high public profile. The anniversaries subsequent to 2017 will bring less known occurrences associated with the War of Independence and the road to partition to public notice. Inevitably, references to tit for tat violence, the actions of murder gangs, crown forces' engagement and the role of collusion as indicated by allegations, such as those associated with the Nixon Gang, will raise parallels with the more recent violent past, all the more because these centenaries will correspond in time with the fifty year commemorations of the outbreak of conflict from

1968. In discussing 'fearful objects', Crooke reminds us of the power, both negative and positive, of the emotional dimension at work when handling sensitive history and the 'fear of revealing injustices and cruelties as much in the present as there is with the past 100 years ago'. In this context McMaster warns that there is still the danger of turning inward to obsess on matters Irish alone rather than placing our memorialisation in the wider seismic events in Europe from 1918 to 1922 which shaped the continent and beyond for the remainder of the twentieth century.

The presenters pay particular attention to the changing contemporary circumstances in which the centenaries of the next five years will play out. Developments both at home and abroad have, at least temporarily, destabilised political balance and confidence and have created potentially a more uncertain and volatile environment in which sensitive past events will encroach. The events remembered and commemorated between 2012 and 2017 became the brief of civil society by default of any agreed strategy on the part of politicians. Any such political consensus for the next five years seems even less possible in current circumstances. Therefore, the response of civil society can take some confidence on what has been achieved but also has to be vigilant and flexible to turbulence. Crooke's 'sense of duty' will be crucial in providing the fortitude necessary to see our society through to new understandings.

It is absolutely legitimate that the stance taken by civil society over the next years to the events of 1917 to 1922 positions itself strongly to debunk the myths of 'redemptive violence' and the 'blood sacrifice', given that such myths have persisted through the twentieth century to the Troubles of 1968-98 and today. However, as a history educationalist may I reinforce the contribution of Phoenix, who implies that the disciplinary rigour of history must not be neglected in our pursuit of societal transformation. His piece is important at emphasising the nuances, subtleties and complexities brought out by historical study, be it through the pathos of individual stories or the variations of local studies. Critically, he makes it clear that it is in the interests of the common good that the past is confronted warts and all and that, once engaged in the critical examination of evidence, the provisional nature of historical truth then allows people to form their own conclusions. For example, Hetherington's hypothesis relating to patriarchy is persuasive but it too must be held up to historical scrutiny. Thus, through such a process, can collective memory evolve.





Keynote Speeches



Dr Eamon Phoenix
'A Divided Ireland in a Dividing Europe'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Azziz5XjCac&feature=youtu.be>

Emerging from the afterglow of 1916, the rise of Sinn Fein and the fall of Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party and the 1917-18 Irish Convention, soldiers return from the Great War to a dividing Ireland in a dividing Europe. As three empires fall, we witness the rise of the new nation state based on self-determination. The impact of the war on three Lurgan families is explored through a one casualty in Dublin of an Irish soldier in the British Army on Easter Monday and two young Lieutenants one a Unionist, another a Home Ruler, casualties on the Western Front. There is also a great sense of Lurgan politics drawing us from the local to the national and international context with a focus on Richard MGhee, a local businessman and Protestant Home Rule MP.

As the America enters the war in 1917, the Irish Convention convened in Dublin, ponders home rule without partition with proposals for minority rights and weighted Unionist representation in a home rule parliament. Ulster unionists stand inflexibly for a 'clean cut' should home rule prevail. This coincides with the advent of the War of Independence/ Anglo-Irish War and the rise in community tensions in Lurgan and elsewhere. Serious sectarian violence erupts by 1920 with as many in the same week as 40, 50 and 70 people include whole families and children, and violence gripping the Lagan valley towns and mass exclusions from work places. Every community has its story from the border counties to the

Lagan Valley towns and Belfast. 1920 saw the birth of the Ulster Special Constabulary as the RIC strained under the war. The 1921 Treaty negotiations confirmed partition; Joe Devlin's attempts to secure nationalist minority safeguards fails, and a disillusioned Sir Edward Carson spoke as a Law Lord of being a puppet in the game that was to being the Conservative Party back to power.

The government of Lloyd George held out the olive branch to the republican movement in the south. In the King's Speech in Belfast City Hall on 22nd June 1921 to set the Northern Ireland Parliament in motion, George V urged Irishmen "to stretch out the hand of forbearance and reconciliation" for one parliament or two. The treaty which followed negotiations on 6th December 1921 established the Irish Free State and acknowledged partition. Northern Ireland formally withdrew on 6th December 1922. Violence ranged on all sides. The Boundary Commission under Article 12 loomed as the political question ahead as Craig and Collins and met in vain.

Finally, as a member of the Irish Government's expert advisory group on the decade, the attitude in Dublin is to put it all out there – whatever the files say on the war of independence - and let the people mull over it because we are seeking the "many sided nature of the truth".



Dr Johnston McMaster
“Beyond 1916 Where Now for
Commemorations in A Changing World?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA9vqQUo76g&feature=youtu.be>

We are not nor should be through with commemoration, the Rising and the Somme laid foundational myths for both states. There are perhaps three clusters of events on which to focus. These are: the violence of the past, democratic foundations and the common good.

Critical reflection on violence, as we face into a bloodier second half of the decade, requires that we are actively critical in a non-judgemental way of dealing with the past. This is necessary if violence is to be rejected as a way of achieving or protecting political objectives. Whatever the terms used or not for the war of independence, civil war and pogroms, we need narrative hospitality and generosity to let go of the generational hurt.

The democratic foundation of the two states in Ireland were born in and from violence, both mainly subject to one party rule and both confessional states. We need to bear this in mind as the foundation of both states are marked. Brexit reminds us again that Northern Ireland is a contested society. Critical imagination is called for in thinking about how we are strengthening democracy, by building, recreating and deepening it; considering what will be its nature, shape and components in 2030.

Consideration of the common good challenges us to think globally about social solidarity, to think about the greater opportunities that will come from social distributive and restorative justice and active compassion.

As we turn now to 1922 we will again see this half of the decade in a wider context. The Russian Revolution of February and October 1917 can be seen as part of WW1. The collapse of the Russian Empire to be replaced by a tyranny invites us to think about the type of society violent revolutions produce and to critique the violence of state and resistance. That indeed is a moral maze.

As we now turn to the end of the war, we should put “end” in quotes. Britain, France and the USA claimed victory, the trench war ended amid unprecedented slaughter and indescribable valour. For millions in Europe the war did not end. From 1918-23, country after country was engulfed in revolution, pogroms, mass expulsions and major military conflict. The rise of fascism and communism prevented the democratization of Europe and less than 20 years later war claimed 66 million lives including 44 million civilians. Arguably since 1949 we have been enjoying the fruits of peace begun with those steps that led to the European Union. The peace of Europe is threatened again by the rise of ethnic racist nationalism and the crisis of capitalism.

We turn now to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. In Europe only the British and French Empires remained. The participants of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference had the difficult task of trying to create a new world order. There were seventeen new republics created and partitioned and the League of Nations was established to promote good governance and peace between nations. Having established the League of Nations, it was ignored. The settlement humiliated Germany and new states established in the Middle East territories of the collapsed Ottoman Empire created volatility. These latter are the origins of the current migration and humanitarian crisis in Europe and which may indeed spark a third global conflict.



In a changing world, democracy, human rights and pluralism are under threat. The context of commemoration compared to the first half of the decade has changed. The uncertainty over Brexit and its consideration in purely economic terms, the post-truth and the characterisation of the free press and media as the enemy of the people in the post USA presidential election, and the collapse of the NI Assembly creates a very different and potentially difficult context for commemoration. However, we can take some confidence from the 2012-2016 period to tackle the years ahead, recognising the difficulties and sensitivities required in marking the civil war and the foundation of Northern Ireland. Sustained intellectual which is critical thought is under pressure to acquiesce to “real people” “real thought” in a context in which human rights and democracy is being dumbed down. Intellectual free thinking is perhaps not allowed. Tony Judt in *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* suggested this may be aimed at restricting the flow of the threatening goods and ideas as well as people. We are in danger of forgetting the 20th century orgy of violence and repression before we have learned from it: forgetting the struggle for peace, justice and human rights and freedom. Ireland in the last three decades of the 20th century is the only part of Europe except for the Balkans that repeated our particular horror and violence, our ancient wars. We are part of a bigger bloody century and Ireland is but a part within it. We need to think more robustly, intellectually, deeply and ethically if we are to remember the future and not descend into the morass of killing, fear and militarised nationalism. While we need to learn that old answers don't and won't work, that will be quite a learning. In Judt's view the past can help us truly understand the perennial complexity of the questions. It can help us remember the past, remember the future and on the way embrace the complexity of the questions.

**Prof Elizabeth Crooke
(Ulster University and Living Legacies)
“The agency of memory: memory,
responsibility and public action”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBXemXINreQ>

The decade of centenaries reminds us the focus is on what we want to achieve now and for the future. Contemporary politics, the news, our conversations are among the influences that shape memory work. It is the same in memory politics. In talking about why we remember people can refer to a sense of duty: that might be to the dead, the living, or the people of the future. If that is the case, public memory work is aspiration-led: there must be preconceived notions of what we wish to achieve. Such actions are influenced by the interplay of personal experiences, outside processes and external agencies.

In this talk Elizabeth outlined the history of two objects to reveal their “untouched”, diverse and difficult histories far more fully. The first object was a Chinese Queue, a plait of hair taken (as a disciplinary act) from a man who volunteered during the First World War as part of the Chinese Labour Corps. It was recently displayed in the Ulster Museum during its 1916 exhibition. The second object was a book of autographs, collected by an internee on the Argenta prison ship moored in Belfast Lough in the early 1920s. Purchased as a result of the HLF funded project, it is now part of the Fermanagh County Museum collection and was displayed in 2012 in the exhibition Connection and Division 1910-1930.

These are examples of objects displayed in museums, but visitors often pass by – either they may not be particularly striking, so they don't catch our eye, or they are too “hot” or “dangerous” to engage with. To develop these ideas further



Elizabeth drew upon her work on memory and material culture (such as Crooke 2016, Crooke 2012). In particular, the concept of the 'fearful object' - objects which can "prick and wound, grab and puncture". She suggests that such "fearful objects" go beyond the "dark objects" of dark tourism or even those things that we might find repulsive or difficult to deal with. The literature in memory studies talks of pasts that are unsayable and that are beyond modes of public reconciliation. We might think of the fearful object as that which we feel extends a threat today –by telling histories we don't wish to acknowledge or engage with. We have been learning through the decade of centenaries work that we are now better equipped to deal with such histories, more willing to confront the implications for the present day.

Memory work then is more about the present day than the past. There are many layers to consider – the nature of the institution, the people engaged in the process, the political and social geography of the place it is located. Then there is the question of how deep do we want to go, perhaps there are risks with engagement including the fear of furthering divisions. There is a fear of revealing injustices or cruelties as much in the present as there is with the past 100 years ago.

Our national cultural institutions are among the locations in which these risks are managed. In public spaces our interpretations of the past are carefully chosen. It is a past that takes account of the purposefulness of remembering in public spaces and specifically, the importance of our cultural spaces as places of authority and influence, and to some degree places of safety where we can at least discuss objects like this. This is a time of great possibility. We can take confidence from the creativity and change to date, which is driven by innovative people prepared to turn reflection on our fearful past into pioneering practice and change.



The Challenges Ahead Maureen Hetherington Ethical and Shared Remembering Project

In addressing the second half of the decade, there are identified critical ethical issues that need to be engaged with:

- 1 This notion of **God and Nationalism** and the role of religion a century ago in nationalism and imperialism and the ethics of '*God on our side*'.
 - 2 **The persistent myth of redemptive violence.** The myth goes back beyond 6,000 years and dominates foreign policy and video games and movies that peace comes through war and violence. It's the way things are but *is it a lie* and is there an alternative myth?
 - 3 **The end of blood sacrifice.** Blood sacrifice was at the heart of the Rising and the Unionist interpretation of the Somme. It sent many young lives to their premature end and still does. Apart from blood sacrifice shaping the foundational myths of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the myth lives on even in secular mode. It underpins religiously motivated extremism today and is invoked and will be when every military life is lost in the tragic middle-east.
 - 4 **Memory and hope.** The challenge in the second half of the decade is really about how we are dealing with the past and if there is enough liberation from the past to enable hope to triumph into a different and more reconciling and healing future. From this perspective there can be no memory without hope.
- There was an emphasis on patriarchy, throughout the project, and this very important theme received a very mixed range of responses:
 - Patriarchy, the oldest and most pervasive narrative, is older than, yet inseparable from, sectarianism, and many men and indeed women, found it difficult to engage with the concept.
 - However, there were many who were deeply interested in pursuing the issue of patriarchy, in relation to the decade, and one of the reasons lay in the dearth of women's stories and experiences. For example, women who were central to the Rising, both in its preparation and throughout, were totally absent from any reporting of the Rising in the papers. Women have also been absent from many Memorials pertaining to the decade.





Where to next

- The second half of the decade needs to be approached thematically, and focused on **Engaging the Root Causes of Past Violence**. We have identified overriding themes, which cover: Historical, Patriarchal, Religious, Political, Militaristic, Cultural root causes of the violence. There are also two other important themes that interlink our past with our present, and contextualised within our current reality of Brexit, world politics and populism, and Trump... and that is exploring what it means to work **Towards the Common Good** and the **Building of a Pluralist Democracy and Civil Society**.
- As a result of the growing interest in patriarchy and patriarchal attitudes and with better understanding of its relation to the violence of the past and more recent troubles, we are developing a Training Programme to begin to deconstruct the patriarchal institutional systems, religious systems and political systems that compromise women and benefit men. And, because of our recent violent conflict, control has also come from state and paramilitaries; whether its women being loyal to the cause or being forced to be in relationships against their choosing, these stories have not yet completely emerged and we hope to begin those sensitive conversations as well.
- Suffice to say, women are falsely led by men to believe that there is a need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else, identifying with a nationalism and introverted obsessions with heritage and also political struggles, often inevitably based on place, which is founded on an introverted, inward-looking history centred on delving into the past for internalised origins.

- The Training Programme will explore:
 - 1 Nature and History of patriarchy
 - 2 The History of Women's Struggle in Ireland for Gender Equality
 - 3 The Gender Myth: More than Two Sexes
 - 4 Religion, Patriarchy and Violence
 - 5 Beyond the Irish Constitution and Gender Politics: Is Reconciliation Possible?
 - 6 Women's Rights, Human Rights.

I want to go back to Memory and Hope, mentioned earlier. Hope is in abundance, and I want to finish with a story. I facilitated a residential, exploring patriarchy, with a large group of women from across Northern Ireland, the group was cross-community in nature and many lived in interface areas. We were exploring the impact of women in the decade and women's lives today and in the final workshop I asked them to go into small groups to come up with headlines on *'100 years from now, what impact would you hope to make on future generations?'*

Some of the responses were hilarious. According to one group, Stormont was dominated by women, and the headlines read *"Men burn their jockstraps outside Stormont, demanding equality!"*

There was also great insight into what life is really like for all of these women. Their hope is for a better future for their children, it was about bread and butter issues and a better quality of life. It was being listened to by those who use violence and who continue to dominate and oppress women.

The ultimate hope for these women is that the commemorative events "will not be used to pull us back into a spiral of violence".





Section 2

Performance - Drama and Music

Overview Damian Smyth Arts Council Northern Ireland

One of the real discoveries of the Decade Reflection and Learning series was the value of artistic work, appropriately guided by historical fidelity, in illuminating difficult aspects of communal memory or representing vividly often complex social, cultural or communal facts. All three sessions reported the involvement of the arts, especially drama, as a useful tool for encouraging discussion, engaging debate and promoting empathy; especially valuable in de-escalating the temptation to be too quick in judgement.

Initial scepticism among professionals, in academia and institutions such as museums, particularly charged with attending cautiously to the past with an intense care for accuracy, that 'drama' would seek to make facts (which are often dull and undramatic) more exciting and 'dramatic' by, in effect, falsifying circumstances to heighten impact, seemed not to have materialised in practice.

In fact, as is clear from the submissions here, those involved in drama work of this type and with these often very difficult stories about the contested past, have developed sophisticated models of best practice which already navigate safely around the pitfalls professionals in other fields might identify.

As one practitioner states: "The key is how to fictionalise fact without being accused of inaccuracy – this is why striving for authenticity is the main concern for the artist. This relates to the design elements of the project."

'Authenticity' – being 'authentic' in navigating verifiable historical fact; 'authentic' in terms of the ownership of perspectives, story and expression; 'authentic' in being trustworthy and reliable as an agreed account – is a useful concept for the particular contribution the arts can make in this area. It contains accuracy, perception, evidence and consent but isn't limited to any one of those.

One common aspect of the models is the primacy of participants' own stories – memories, family myth, artefacts and objects. These can be built, with consent and with actual historical knowledge, into coherent episodes of recognisable storytelling which are still faithful to history. Being essentially 'open' narratives, such work is a beginning of reflection and

discussion rather than in any sense a closure.

It is also worth noting that any variety of artistic response, whether assisted by professional artists or not, can help unpick predictable or conventional responses. The simple act of 'imagining oneself as someone else' – walking a mile in those shoes – seems to have been an important, liberating process, without negating the value of particular political or cultural perspectives.

It was clear though that professional practitioners – artists – can be key to the process, especially where groups or communities are unfamiliar with the mechanisms of 'theatre' ('being someone else') and where stereotyping is a risk.

It is also true that artists bring an adequate level of artistic validity to the process. This is important because experience shows that the higher quality the artistic content, the more satisfying and accurate the historical experience for the participant group. Where artistic expertise is limited, the historical experience is harder to express, complexities become intractable to representation, and the dramatic content can quickly descend into stereotype and monochrome caricature.

One artist states here: "Whilst history is full of facts it rarely seeks to offer commentary or aspires to create empathy. Empathy is the key to understanding and the means by which this is done is to explore themes, not personalities."

Another factor which quickly also became clear is that the engagement of artists in this manner, whether by institutions such as libraries or museums or by community groups, is not as expensive a business as many imagined! Sustained engagement, even over a short period of time, with individual writers or with theatre practitioners, is often within the manageable resource even of small groups.

There are sources, such as the Arts Council, where properly constituted small groups can access support to assist with the development of community-specific high-grade theatre work derived from the managed release of shared stories and historical context and which is consequently 'owned' by them. Such work is an entry point for others in the community who share the narrative; and for those from elsewhere for whom the narrative is new and unexpected.

Finally, the non-verbal arts should not be ignored. Exhibitions – whether of research material, contemporary documentation (such as posters, fliers, newspapers), diaries and journals, photographs, private or iconic objects – have a proven record





in helping the understanding of history, making it more vivid, less remote and more immediate. Formal artwork, presented as illustrations, for example – portraits, battle scenes, maps, cartoons, other representations of incidents, iconic paintings depicting war – also has its place and can encourage participants to think outside the usual sources of propaganda or conventional and perhaps flawed historical perceptions. Music too – whether new songs and compositions reflective of past losses, or contemporary songs and melodies of the period – can be extraordinarily powerful and, again, can help create a reflective space (a ‘cooler’ zone) and promote empathy, even while the use of evocative music as a recruiting agent in the first place can be analysed.

One of the consequences of the role of the arts was the sense that successful interventions should be captured for future use as legacy, by video for instance. This would have cost implications of course, at least where the recording was to be adequately presentable even online; but those would be unlikely to be prohibitive. As a record of a particular group’s or community’s commemorative activity and also as a model of the results such intervention could produce, filming would of course be very useful. But it would be no substitute for a particular group’s or community’s own direct engagement with the substance of the past; there will always be local nuances and variations which would make a perfect match impossible.

However, whether on their own as a driver of authentic memory, or as occasions of intimacy and empathy during a programme of talks, as gear-changes within a day of other commemorative activities, as a soundtrack to commemorative events or as a silent physical context in a space where open and free discussion can occur, the arts have an important role to play and should be recognised as an option in how to make the large forces of history at once human, personal and immediate.



Kabosh Extracts - Introduced by Paula McFetridge

26th January Jethro Centre, Shankill Parish, Lurgan – focus grassroots activity

For the conference in Lurgan Kabosh staged two short pieces:

- Extract from *Elizabeth Corr* by Maria McManus, which was part of the Short Strand community project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Rising. The play brings to life Elizabeth Corr, a local activist who went to Dublin on Easter Saturday with her fellow Cumann na mBan; we witness her as an older lady returning to Dublin in 1948 to give her testimony to the Military Bureau of History. She talks about the events of that fateful weekend, her experiences on returning home and her hopes for Belfast.





- *July 1st 1916* by Seth Linder was originally commissioned for staging in Shankill Library for the *Shankill Stories* community project. It tells the story of Mrs Dowell, a local woman who lost 7 sons at the Battle of the Somme. The play consists of two reflections by this stoical mother and her eldest son as they reflect on the awfulness of war.



These project extracts display the potential of working with local communities and how to give a voice to narratives that have not been heard before. Narratives that are perceived to be single-identity but offer distinct parallels as to the individual experience of conflict and remembrance of it. Both pieces, as well as being staged as part of a larger project in the communities from which they evolved, have toured extensively to many non-theatre spaces.

When exploring commemoration, it is important to try and give voice to the silent, those who have not been represented previously, and importantly those whose voice challenges the

perceived norm. When a community identifies a historical moment they want to bear witness to, the artist strives to give a 3-dimensional form to individuals and/or stories that didn't feature in previous events; often because the community were not previously ready to listen to that narrative. Commemorations are not passive, they offer active discourse, they explore the people behind the headlines.

The responsible artist is acutely aware of when is the 'right' time to tell a story, who it is for and so how to tell it – the 'right' time meaning to ensure that it won't fall on deaf ears. Understanding the context of the original staging (time and place) informs structure, content and style. In addition, it is important to consider revival of the work on an ongoing basis so the narrative of one community can be shared with another without compromising quality. There is also the option of sharing the methodology of the work as well as the actual performance – so in bearing witness to the historical narratives of the perceived 'other' a community can create their own stories in a similar format and reciprocate the sharing process. This can be very powerful as it both demonstrates similarity and difference in a tangible, human form. It is more difficult to dismiss a narrative when it is humanised.

24th February PRONI, Belfast – focus District council programmes and council museum services

For the **Council programmes, Council supported museums at PRONI** Belfast session Kabosh staged two short pieces:

- Extract from *The Box* by Carlo Gebler: based on the paper archive of World War 1 nurse Olive Swanzy which was found in a Rostrevor attic. Her collection consists of sketches, poems and paintings gathered from soldiers in her care in a range of field hospitals. Kabosh staged the premiere in the Ulster Museum to coincide with the Nerve Centre Creative Centenaries exhibition. The archive was the catalyst for a fictional drama exploring the impact of living through war on the frontline for two individuals: Olive Swanzy herself and her fictional lover. The play examined how unearthing the sketch books propelled the two characters back to the field hospital and the long-term impact of war.



- *No News is Good News* by Philip Orr was commissioned by Somme 100 for the NMNI Cultra site. The promenade piece moved audiences between four locations on the day that a telegram arrived to announce the death of a local lad at the Battle of the Somme. On this occasion the narrative is fictional but provides an authentic, powerful social account of the time, its impact heightened by staging in the historical surroundings of the museum. The performed extract was from the village school principal reflecting on the loss of young lives and her memories of him growing up.

Both extracts display the potential of animating archive material and the value of council, museum, artist collaborations.

Kabosh projects vary in source material – they can be the result of a gathered oral archive (a first or 2nd person narrative), anecdotal information from the current keepers of site, archival information, an introduction to a contested or single-identity location or the desire to explore a social issue

of contemporary importance; or a combination of any of these.

The potential of collaboration between the artist and the historian is considerable – both engage in subjective analysis of site, narrative and people with the aim of breathing life into our past and presenting a ‘truth’. Often the historian imagines their role as purely factual, absolute, whereas they can also be the catalyst, the springboard for imagined stories from the past. They can provide the grain of truth from which the artist can invent. This relationship offers new perspective for commemorations.

Previous Kabosh projects have evolved from the company being asked to maximise access to an historic site (Titanic Drawing Rooms, Castle Espie); giving voice to an historical figure (Mabel Annesley in Castletwellan Castle, Thomas Andrews & Pirrie for 2012); commemorating key moments in our history (400th anniversary of the foundation of Belfast in St Georges Church); encouraging the public to reconsider the significance of archive materials (Titanica for NMNI). The list is endless.



The key is how to fictionalise fact without being accused of inaccuracy – this is why striving for authenticity is the main concern for the artist. This relates to the design elements of the project: providing a researched framework for a new narrative about the past.

30th March - Education Outreach and Creativity took place in the Diversecity Partnership

For the **Education Outreach and Creativity session in Derry Londonderry** Blue Eagle Productions and Tracy McCrory staged two short pieces:

Jonathan Burgess Blue Eagle Productions

- Blue Eagle Productions - Jonathan Burgess
 - Extracts from *To Thee I Serve* when Downey and Love speak about the issue of the Easter Rebellion
- Extracts from *To Thee I Serve* - the trauma for those left behind.

Drama is a core tool for the development of community relations, which I feel is applicable to all situations where there is conflict or confrontation and serves as a means to diffuse such situations, as the process creates empathy and understanding between opposing sets of views, or to allow people from outside a particular community the opportunity to have an insight into another.

The method for the creation of this is the research and development of scripts which are staged by professional actors. The first part of this process - the creation of a script - is the fundamental means by which this is done. The author would research a theme (usually speaking to several people for whom the theme is pertinent) and amalgamating not so much their stories but the impact that their story, their theme, has had on their life and the lives of the people around them - how it has affected their world view and how they relate to the people around them.

This can be done for one side of a particular theme, for example I have recently finished working with South East Fermanagh Forum (SEFF) who are a victims group in that part of Northern Ireland who have felt marginalised and ignored. "Waiting...." told the collective story of their feelings through a fictional story set within one family. This is a one-sided presentation and does not seek to negotiate a compromised position through the drama, but rather offer an opening position from which to offer an insight into this community and / or to start a conversation.

Conversely, the drama can be used to bring differing views together and have them explored as part of the performance. For example, in my production "Divided By History, United By Music" where two men who have become friends from opposite sides of the political divide in Ireland in 1916 explore issues pertaining to the motivations and aspirations in relation to Great War and Ulster Crisis. This is not a real or historical discussion but can represent the themes in a clear way, which offers an insight into all perspectives surrounding a particular issue.

Whilst history is full of facts it rarely seeks to offer commentary or aspires to create empathy. Empathy is the key to understanding and the means by which this is done is to explore themes, not personalities. This is the reason that professional actors are used. If the drama seeks to represent a particular person, then people are less free to question the story which is being illustrated. If I say something is "my truth" then it is not up for debate. If an actor represents a theme, it is not "their truth" and in questioning or querying it, an audience is not constrained by the parameters of reality - it is a hypothetical situation and becomes a much more malleable tool.

Drama offers the opportunity to do this, providing a forum to demonstrate the hard issues, but a means of making constructive progress whilst dealing with these issues in a safe environment.



Tracey McCrory Musician /Composer

On the 30th March at The Diverse City Partnership in Derry/Londonderry as part of the Reflection and Years Ahead Decade Learning Event a short performance combining music and drama reflected on the importance of the story of the Battle of Messines and also the need for artists to reflect on the Decade of Remembrance. The music was performed by David Blair (Caw Flute Band) and Robert Arbuckle alongside Tracey McCrory.

➤ Tracey McCrory

Flowers of the Forest – Messines 1917 introduced by Tracey McCrory

Tracey McCrory (Musician/Composer) worked alongside local actors and musicians from both sides of the community to reflect on the importance of the story of the Battle of Messines, during WW1 where soldiers from 16th Irish Division and 36th Ulster Division fought and died side by side. June 2017 is the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Messines and many commemorations are taking place on the Island of Ireland and in Belgium. Combining music and drama, the artists took the audience on a journey of reflection and insight to this battle that has become an important symbol of reconciliation on the island of Ireland.

The drama was performed by Shaun Coyle, Francis Harkin and Robert Kelly and directed by Eamonn Baker. This drama is set between the Meeke home in Benvarden, Co. Antrim

and in the First World War trenches at Messines in Belgium, “Flowers of the Forest” is a First World War drama with music, based on the true life story of John Meeke, a UVF volunteer who joins the 36th Ulster Division and finds himself in Belgium in 1917 along with soldiers from the Nationalist 16th Irish Division.

The story is based on the true events of Messines on 7th June 1917 when John Meeke risked his own life to save Nationalist leader Willie Redmond during the assault on the little Belgian village of Whitesheet [Whytschaete] and is the inspiration for modern initiatives towards peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

The story has been researched both in Ireland and in Belgium. The script is written by Sam Starrett, with special music composed by Sam Starrett, Tracey McCrory and Richard Laird

As part of the 100-year anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Messines in Belgium Tracey McCrory and Richard Laird have been commissioned to perform their composition ‘*The Messines Suite*’ on the 7th June at the Island of Ireland Peace Pak, Masen.

The ceremony will reflect on the engagement, side by side, of the 36th (Ulster) Division and the 16th (Irish) Division at the Battle of Messines Ridge, the remembrance of which has become an important symbol of reconciliation on the island of Ireland.



Section 3



Jethro Centre Shankill Parish Lurgan

Marking Centenary Anniversaries: Practice and The Challenges of the Years Ahead

Key note speeches, artistic input, case studies and the challenges ahead structured discussion.

An overview of the overall purpose and structure of the can be found at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebhXhEGjO_I&feature=youtu.be

The three *Reflection and Years Ahead* events were held between January and March 2017 in three locations throughout Northern Ireland. Each session had a specific focus. These were:

- **Grassroots activity** held on Thursday 26th January 2017 in the Jethro Centre, Shankill Parish, Lurgan.
- **District Council Programmes and council supported Museum Services** held on Friday 24th February 2017 in the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI), Belfast.
- **Education, Outreach and Creativity** held on Thursday 30th March 2017 in the DiverseCity Partnership Derry –Londonderry.

GRASSROOTS ACTIVITY

Dr Mary Gethins, Jethro Centre, Lurgan Community Outreach Programme (COG)

Formed in approximately 2008, COG reflects a partnership forged between Shankill Church of Ireland and St Peter's and St Paul's Roman Catholic parishes to bring together people from both major communities to assist in breaking down

barriers and healing wounds shared by the inhabitants of our sadly divided town.

Today, we continue the mission to build trust, understanding and mutual esteem. There exists an invisible but widely acknowledged line across our main street dividing north from south Lurgan, Catholics from Protestants, where housing, business, health, education and leisure, with few exceptions, separate the communities from each other.

A committee of 8 people (3 Church of Ireland, 1 Presbyterian and 4 Catholic) offer a programme mainly of talks, discussions, workshops and site visits of interest to both communities, presented or facilitated by professionals including Dr Eamon Phoenix and Rev Dr Johnston McMaster. We use a 3 strand approach (1) local history; (2) Irish and British-Irish history since the 5th century and (3) topics and events related to faith and culture.

So far the programme relating to the **Decade of Anniversaries** has included: World War 1 poetry; Irish soldiers in WW1; Irish labour in the era of Connolly and Larkin; visit to war cemeteries in Dublin – and tea with the Lord Mayor in the Mansion House; 1914-1918 northern nationalists, the Great War and the Easter Rising; 'We will not have Home Rule' – unionism and landlordism from Carson to Craig; rebellious women – Countess Markievicz, Maud Gonne Mac Bride, Cumann na mBan; joint seminar with the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society (COG's cross border 'twin') on the Great War; brief presentations by our committee members on various topics related to WW1, including military history, music, poetry, stretcher bearers, chaplains.

Local history has included a conducted tour and talks on the Brownlow residence and family who were local landlords; presentation on Lurgan born luminary AE (George Russell); a tour of a local cemetery with dramatic illustrations and led by a committee member.

Faith and culture events have included St Patrick and Celtic Christianity; Presbyterians and the Irish language; being Jewish in Northern Ireland; history of Quakers in the local community; journeys of faith on the island of Ireland; visits to local Churches; history and theology of sectarianism (trilogy); residential seminar entitled 'Grasping the Nettle' with papers delivered by clergy representing the 4 main Churches.

Joint site visits with others groups to diverse places such as the Eileen Hickey Republican Museum and the Somme Heritage Museum.



What has worked?

- 1 Audiences vary between 30 and 80 usually. A welcome exception was a congregation of approximately 250 at the Christian Unity Service in January 2017.
- 2 Particularly popular have been talks on significant personalities, especially from the local area and when a local speaker can be sourced.
- 3 A residential seminar where presentations and follow-up in discussion groups provoked much interesting and honest discourse, seemed well worth the investment. Some myths regarding the faith of 'others' were examined and debunked.
- 4 An early decision to locate events alternately in two places – the Jethro Centre and St Peter's Parish Centre – has been fully accepted by some who, hitherto, did not venture into the 'alien' part of town.
- 5 Support from clergy from the two founding denominations, by attending our events when possible, has been most encouraging.
- 6 Use of drama to illustrate sectarianism, alternative life experiences, or identity issues. Examples: *Release* by the Derry Playhouse; plays by Philip Orr – *100 Years On* and *Half Way House*.

Ongoing challenges and future development

Persuade clergy and parishioners of the other Christian Churches to become involved and develop closer relationships, bringing 'others' into their normal social circle, and focus on the shared Christian legacy by attending 'other' Christian Church services in groups.

Provide a programme at a reasonable cost to participants and overcome a reluctance to take leadership roles. Place greater emphasis on arts based events.

How can we measure progress objectively and accurately?



Helen Perry Causeway Coast and Glens Museum Services On the brink: the Politics of Conflict 1914 - 1916 - Volunteer Strand

Project partners: Mid Antrim Museum Service and Causeway Museum Service.

Funders: Heritage Lottery Fund and 9 local authorities.

The purpose of the project was exploring the impact and legacy of 1914- 1916 within local, national and international contexts.

On the Brink sought to explain what, why and how we commemorate, in the aftermath of major outbreaks of war and revolution, and to question what we have forgotten and why. The project aimed to challenge one-sided interpretations of 1916 events, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, that still cause division and conflict in communities today. The project was underpinned by the Decade of Centenaries Principles of Engagement developed by the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2011.

Key Learning Outcome: to deepen understanding and ownership of multiple perspectives and inclusive approaches to site interpretation and local focus stories for World War One.

The project outputs were two travelling exhibitions, 2 secondary schools and community workshop programmes, an on-line Learning Resources <http://www.thebraid.com/politics-of-conflict/learning/> and <http://Nlarchive.org/causeway/>, and the Evaluation and Share the Learning Seminar.

Volunteer Strand

To enlist and train local people to become tour guides of local sites of significance connected to World War One.

Process: The process involved the recruitment of 16 volunteers and another 12 contributing research; providing training in research, script writing and tour guiding. Participating in Community Working Group sessions and a cross border residential exploring sites linked to the Easter Rising and '*the poppy and the lily*' facilitated workshop. Conducting pilot and public tours. Nine volunteers achieved accreditation to OCN level two

During the mid-term review with volunteers, a second phase of all the training was introduced to recruit more volunteers, improve training, extend tours and take advantage of newly introduced accreditation for tour guides.

In addition, the volunteers participated in evaluation, seminar



sessions and shaping their engagement with museums services beyond the project - tours, talks, new tours, new businesses, new projects. They contributed exhibition and learning resource content and acted as a conduit of private collections for the two exhibitions.

Volunteer Experience: Passionate and committed, the volunteers contributed substantial hours of their time, not all formally recorded. As a cross community Working Group they shared their work with and supported each individual tours. Some maintained their commitment for over two years. The quality and depth of the tours has been frequently commented on by visitors. In their words

‘life changing, life affirming... and life-saving’

‘shared history offers understanding but you don’t have to agree’

‘if we can tell stories in a respectful and unbiased manner we will have achieved great things here...we have a big project here but a very worthwhile one...’

‘engaging with someone in the role of a tour guide was also useful. Looking at how they composed their tours, engaged the audience and the tips that were given by some, will be invaluable...for our own tours.’ (cross border residential).

Outcomes: Included increased community confidence, a model for community planning, new heritage projects and PEACEIV, new business and new employment created, and new resources, partners and new tours.

Lessons Learnt: The need for an experienced staff team with the time to make a considerable input. The long-term commitment required from volunteers; and the qualitative difference dedicated volunteers and staff can make.

The Volunteer Strand anchored the rest of the Programme - community networking, exhibition content and collections. It was clear that mid-term reviews and exit strategies are essential. The project exerted influence on how Local Authorities work with volunteers.

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DISTRICT COUNCIL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL SUPPORTED MUSEUM PROGRAMMES

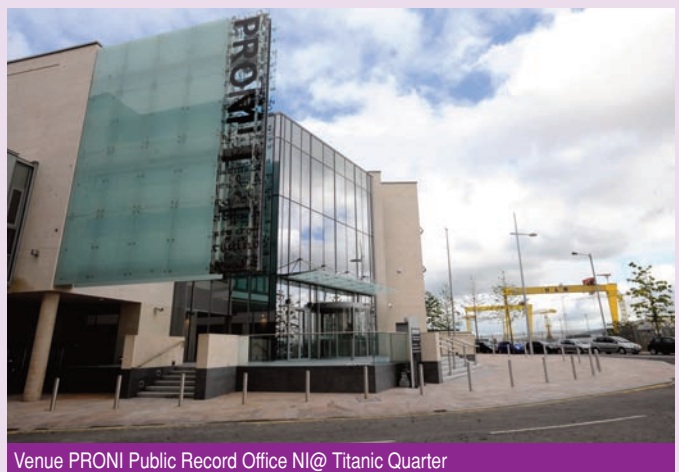
David Robinson: Belfast City Council’s Decade of Centenaries Programme

In 2011, the Council adopted a series of principles under which a three phased approach to all of our events and activities would be undertaken. These principles have underpinned all of our events and activities to date, and will continue to do so through the rest of the Decade.

The first period, 1912-1914, was entitled “Shared History, Different Allegiances”. The second period, 1914-1918, came under the banner of “Belfast; Reflections on 1916”. A programme for the final period of 1918-1922 is currently being developed.

Through working together, the Council has been able to mark those key events in our shared history that are significant to all, with Councillors able to demonstrate respect for different opinions and views and able to attend and participate in events that are important to all communities. This spirit of outreach and respect has been evident throughout the Decade.

In July 2016, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Mary Ellen Campbell, officially launched the exhibition entitled “Fields of Battle; Lands of Peace” in the grounds of the City Hall. For the Deputy Lord Mayor, it was important to lend her support to such a worthwhile project. She later spoke in public about her own grandfather, Rifleman Edward Campbell who had fought in the Battle of the Somme. As a Sinn Féin Deputy Lord Mayor, she felt that this personal story represented an example of the diversity of our collective history.



Venue PRONI Public Record Office NI@ Titanic Quarter



In a speech to the Council's Decade of Centenaries Conference in November 2016, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Brian Kingston provided a wide ranging review of the Council's programme. He specifically acknowledged the significance of the Easter Rising for Nationalists in Belfast, highlighting the role of women from Belfast in events in Dublin in 1916. These public words from civic leaders were indicative of the inclusive nature of the Council's commemorations and demonstrated the positive environment that had been created for events and activities.

Through the Council's Civic Programme of events and activities, the people of Belfast have really engaged in a spirit of respect and dignity. People stretched themselves, seeking to engage in events from different perspectives and that is what the story of the Commemorations should be; a City that is not bound by our complex past. It is a positive and welcome sign that all of the events took place within a positive environment.

The Council is grateful to the numerous partners who have assisted and supported us in the roll-out of our programme and we sought to incorporate a range of media to develop events and activities that were interactive, engaging and educational.

One innovation in our "Belfast; Reflections on 1916" exhibition was the development of a Pen Friend, which enabled people who were blind or visually impaired to access the exhibition and its content. This was an important element of bringing the exhibition alive to more people in our City.

This exhibition was visited by over 15,000 people. Some of the feedback comments included:

- *Touching memorial! So glad City Hall has finally decided to share two cultures. Great work! Both sides of the community have been represented very well!*
- *Grew up in Belfast and learnt stuff I never knew. Thoroughly recommend to anybody :)*
- *Excellent, complex & equitable exhibition. New & challenging material. Will tell friends to come.*
- *A very befitting tribute to those who gave their lives.*
- *Excellent & interesting. Highlight of our visit to Belfast. Thank you.*
- *Very informative & unbiased. Well done!*



COLLETTE BROWNLEE – LINEN CENTRE AND LISBURN MUSEUM

The Easter Rising and Us: A Lisburn Museum Community Engagement Project with Tonagh Ladies' Group, Lisburn

Over the last four years, Lisburn Museum has initiated several community engagement programmes which embraced the Decade of Centenaries. The first of these was a cross-community intergenerational project: ***World War One and US***. Partly funded by NIMC, this eighteen-month project resulted in an exhibition, curated by community groups in partnership with museum staff. The exhibition was hosted for three weeks by Lisburn Museum and duplicates of exhibition panels were given to participant groups for display in their own communities. One of the participant groups expressed an interest in returning to Lisburn Museum to explore the history of the Easter Rising. On this occasion, only one of the original groups could participate, although the others will be invited to take part in a 1918-1923 project, starting September 2017.

The ***Easter Rising and US*** was a year-long project with similar elements to the previous work, this time aiming towards a publication, using a similar template to before: Lisburn Museum's temporary exhibitions, guest speakers and site visits. Tonagh Ladies' Group (TLG) is a long established group but had no previous connection with Lisburn Museum until the first community engagement project. They expressed a desire to look at the Easter Rising events through a twenty-first century lens, in the context of 1916 female protagonists. Lisburn Museum is publishing TLG's booklet of personal chapters, reflecting the individual journeys of each lady as they engaged critically with this particular history. Together, TLG have also constructed a *Twenty-first Century Declaration for the Nation*, reflecting their modern day views and concerns as women.

These projects were important at bringing non-visitors into Lisburn Museum to work with exhibitions, collections and subject specialists in order to create a secure learning environment. They were also instrumental in creating ways of dealing with awkward and contentious history. By allocating resources, space and time to community engagement projects, museums easily become natural places for this type of work. Although the use of collections and exhibitions as a nucleus for community engagement programmes has long been integral to lifelong learning and adult education, Lisburn Museum programmes became more than this.



Whilst the museum allocated physical space where participants could ruminate, explore, research and discover varying aspects of personal and social history – perhaps for the first time – it also facilitated non-linear participatory learning which was experimental and evolving. The respectful atmosphere created was conducive to promoting mental well-being, expressed through the willingness of participants to openly declare differing views.

The Decade of Centenaries provided an opportunity to try new approaches to get non-visitors and diverse audiences to engage with history. Staff at Lisburn Museum now see this as an integral part of their work, they benefitted as much from the programmes as the participants!

EDUCATION OUTREACH AND CREATIVE APPROACHES

Maureen Hetherington Ethical and Shared Remembering Director Towards Understanding and Healing and The Junction

The Junction is a Community Relations and Peace Building Initiative set up to address issues of ongoing concern that are barriers to peace and peace building.

Our project, Ethical and Shared Remembering: Commemoration in a New Context: Remembering a Decade of Violence and Change 1912-1922. The project was launched in September 2010. Our thinking was initially based on a chapter written by Johnston McMaster in 2007, for a book published through Towards Understanding and Healing.

As progenitor, Johnston McMaster in partnership with Cathy Higgins and The Junction, developed a contextualised interdisciplinary approach using philosophy, history, theology and politics, to unpack and explore the key centennial events of that time. We were non-prescriptive, we opened up the space for critical exploration, challenging existing narratives and introducing new narratives, deliberately to complexify and complicate that period in time. We were not about blame and shame but rather interrogating the past in a way that might open us to new thinking and ideas about visioning our future.

What have we done

- Raised awareness about events 100 years ago that have shaped the social, political, cultural and economic landscape of Ireland, North and South, to this day.
- Through the development of a training manual, six booklets and five publications, we have encouraged and empowered those who have participated in our workshops and programmes to critically explore the sectarian narrative that has shaped how we think and

behave towards those we see as the 'other'.

- By setting ethical guidelines and offering ethical ways of remembering and commemorating, we have impacted and influenced policy across Council areas. We also helped to shape and influence policy in the South.
- Throughout the project life, we have engaged over 50,000 people, in workshops, community education programmes and training of trainers, conferences, seminars, information sharing sessions etc. This figure doesn't reflect those who accessed the written materials and those who listened to the radio and read the papers.
- We also engaged in creative approaches, such as exploring history through the characters and personalities of the time, which was the very popular "Personalities of the Decade".

What have we learned

- There is a genuine hunger to learn more about the different narratives and perspectives of the past, and an acknowledgement of the lack of knowledge about this period in time. Participants were keen to engage on a cross-community basis, open to listen to other stories using our principles and the concepts of hospitality, plurality and flexibility, which they employed with great respect.
- Participants in our programmes were keen to critically interrogate the past and challenge the dominant narratives and myths.
- There were participants who came prepared for 'battle' to challenge any viewpoints that might conflict with their certainties. However, our approach and methodology allowed them to explore and unpack a more complex and uncertain history than had been previously embraced.
- We were delighted that a number of community relations practitioners, who employed our guiding principles, were able to manage sometimes very difficult conversations and receive positive outcomes from the encounters.
- Two significant events, The Easter Rising and the Somme, revealed different insights:
 - There were loyalists who complained about the 'greening' of First World War and the Somme. They believed there was a high-jacking and diminishing of their historical narrative of the Somme.
 - And there were also loyalist groups engaging with nationalists and republicans, looking at both the Rising and the Somme.
- There was a healthy reappraisal due to 'longer lens' reflection and new information, and historical perspectives were changed!



- Participants, on the whole, accepted that narratives always change and distance helps recover a more accurate and truthful approach to the decade and to events such as The Rising, The Somme and the First World War, partly due to the ongoing excavation of historical detail and narratives.
- Education was seen as important to overcome ignorance towards something more truthful and liberating from a fictional past.
- The Churches face a number of challenges; how they respond to the commemorative events and how they address the violence of that time through their approach. There is an acknowledgement also that the second half of the decade will prove even more difficult and problematic and will require sensitive challenges and requiring not a little moral courage.



Niall Kerr Nerve Centre - Digital and creative approaches to the Decade of Centenaries

The Nerve Centre's Creative Centenaries project drew on its experiences of delivery over the past number of years, with a specific emphasis on its Heritage Lottery

Funded project during 2016. Creative Centenaries began in 2014 with support from the then DCAL department and set out to take a creative approach to helping the public learn and interact with the Decade of Centenaries. Educational resources including graphic novels, animations, interactive eBooks and other learning resources have been created to bring new life to the timeframe.

During 2016, and with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Creative Centenaries embarked on an exhibition, events and outreach programme focussed on the centenaries of 1916. One of the key points raised was the importance of partnership work in developing and delivering projects throughout the year – including with National Museums NI, PRONI, Libraries NI, Belfast Somme 100 and the Tower Museum.

Creative Centenaries partnered with the Tower Museum in Derry~Londonderry on the **1916: Untold Stories** exhibition and events programme, examining local connections to the events of 1916. The **Creative Centenaries #MakingHistory 1916 Exhibition** was a major installation at the Ulster Museum in Belfast, exploring the creative and cultural forces active during a year of war and destruction. A digital version

of the **#MakingHistory** exhibition was developed as an interactive touch screen and currently forms a part of the National Library of Ireland's WWI Ireland exhibition in Dublin.

Exhibitions allowed Creative Centenaries, as a cultural and creative project, to embrace the collections and archives of partners and re-imagine and re-interpret them in new ways. Key to the success of the exhibitions was a complimentary programme of activity including events and workshops that engaged a new audience base to themes of history and heritage. The **#MakingHistory** exhibition, for example, was accompanied most weekends at the Ulster Museum with pop-up virtual reality, green screen, FabLab sessions or other digital engagement sessions.

Creative Centenaries programmed dozens of events and activities linked to 1916 throughout the year, including talks and lectures, film screenings, music events and walking tours. Over 5,500 (mostly young) people participated in workshops. The project also worked with partners in the support of other events and activities taking place across Northern Ireland. The aim of events was to increase awareness and understanding of the period for a wide audience base through a varied programme of activity. Over 25,000 people took part in events that Creative Centenaries had organised or partnered on.

An outreach and education element of the project used creative and digital approaches to allow a largely youth and school base to explore and learn about the events of 1916. Filmmaking, coding, gaming, comic book storytelling, audio production and digital fabrication were some of the approaches offered to schools, community groups and more across Northern Ireland. This approach made learning more accessible and engaging for new audiences as well as providing supplementary digital skills training.

Overall, the main findings from the project included the benefit of working in partnership with other involved organisations. The project was also able to show how creativity, technology and innovative approaches could be used to enhance and improve learning and interaction with contentious histories while partners also saw the benefits of an increased creative provision.



Section 4

Summary of the facilitated discussion

Reflection - The key themes that emerged across the workshops in the three locations were:

- 1 Effective practice, in particular the use of drama, site visits and related programmes, small groups workshops with dialogue and discussion, the use of artefacts and the sensitivities of language.
- 2 Embedding learning in the context of formal education and community settings and working with contentious history.
- 3 Methodologies, particularly tailoring the methodologies employed to the participants and the need for engagement and the challenge this brings with it.
- 4 Shared history and relating this to understanding each other's perspectives and complexity.
- 5 Measuring the impact in terms of the difficulties in doing so, common methods used, the collation of evidence and some misgivings.
- 6 Leadership and its importance at local, political and civic levels.
- 7 The concept of critical distance between participants and the lead organisation, such as by the introduction of a funders' requirements or a third party to deliver the programme, can enable greater use of different and challenging perspectives.

Effective practice

The use of **drama** as an engagement tool either full length plays or short extracts tailored to smaller venues such as community centres and museums was much commented upon across all three workshops. *"Getting plays to local communities [is] very important"*. Drama can open up access to participants on a cross community basis. The issue of the cost of production, professional actors and theatre companies presents difficulties and therefore access to funding to support this approach.

Site visits *"walking, talking, getting people to see things they would not otherwise have seen"* were used effectively. Site

specific programmes, site visits and lectures were included. Visits to the Glasnevin Trust (Dublin) were a *"great learning curve"*. The work of Somme 100 (Belfast City Council's community engagement programme along with Belfast 1916) was commended.

The Corrymeela Plantation project and the Community Dialogues residential at which there was willing engagement by both sides underlined the importance of **safe and controlled environments**, with small groups and in which trust and relationships were present or could develop. *"Smaller audiences, paradoxically, work better"*.

Approaches in which *"context or reconciliation happen naturally [are] more successful in attracting interest in the first place"*.

When **films, lectures, roadshows and workshops** combined with the ability to discuss, to delve deeper, engagement occurred.

The need to continue to develop **appealing learning materials** was identified.

Artefacts and **memorabilia** are particularly useful in storytelling and opening up conversations. This can lead to creating empathy and building connections between the local, human and wider context. The third workshop considered the impact of a **"fearful object"** that which can still prick and hurt.

Among the issues identified in connection to artefacts were the release of artefacts from private to public collections; the preservation, curation and retention of materials used in engaging communities, so that the narrative of the objects is preserved and made available for future use.

In another context the work of **Living Legacies**, and **trips to battlefields** was also highlighted very useful interventions. The **participants journey** set out below highlights the **role undertaken by councils** in developing programmes consistently over a number of years.

In common with drama, artefacts, it would help if groups were supported to access these through main **central contacts points and advice clinics** was suggested. It would also be helpful to develop a list of historians and speakers to aid access.



Participants' Journey – Based on the workshop conversations this is a reflection on the range and breadth of the event attended, watched or read about in the media

Participants journey: The following events attended were well organised and important.

Parades – Belfast – Celebration Home Rule and Covenant

UVF marching in Belfast – live re-enactment in Belfast City Centre – 36th Ulster Division

Ulster Covenant Day – out on the street

Somme Heritage Centre – City Hall

WW1 event in Armagh

Plays – Banbridge Council in the cinema

Banbridge officer did a lot of work – until the Council's merged and the Centenaries have been put on the back burner

Funded seats in the Town Centre – Lurgan

Plaque at the railway – ghost soldiers in to the town – community very good – many people attended
Nice dignified parade and service

Newry – 6 week course – through the Council although spaces limited to 12

Found things out about other traditions – majority gelled well

Arts stuff very good – Halfway House – play in Jethro Centre very good. Conversations pitched at a high level/Crows on a wire

Play on the Somme at the Armagh theatre – very good

Promotion of learning

The inclusion of **family stories, memories and local knowledge** is effective and critical to making the link with the wider national or international context. The readiness to engage is in part about opportunity and fear of engagement. *[The] local slant/connection – generates more interest at local level – relevant connection to the community (townlands).*

Therefore, engagement needs to be tailored to specific groups, contexts or potential participants. It involves engaging in a different way, enabling challenge to one's own viewpoints. It *"locks in"* learning through the use of the effective practices outlined above. Church visits and battlefields visits have also been effective in this regard. *"Targeting specific communities and groups (including existing volunteers) can deliver impact. Get local people involved and that generates respect in the local community."*

It is recognised that programmes **address gaps** in knowledge and that there is an appetite to understand the

period. As learning in the context of the decade involves **contentious history** moving from the past to the more recent Troubles, providing training and support for teachers, museum staff and educators is required. **Personalities of the Decade** was an effective engagement with very disparate groups. **Appealing materials** should continue to be needed as this is relevant to the curriculum. It is important to leave **space for dissent** so that discussion and learning about history takes place.

The **focus on humanising** the narrative is important. It has led to participants thinking about the long term impact on veterans and their families, to trauma and then relating this to the Troubles and more recent wars.

Sensitivities around language and the words - mark, commemorate and celebrate - remain. There is a need to be aware how important the contemporary is for commemoration. Having a sense of time and place is important. The conscious and unconscious use of the word *celebration* was noted.



Methodologies explored - cultural and heritage organisations

Methodologies museums.

Engaging deeper by gathering and accessing personal stories and developing better forms of engagement.

Time to invest in community engagement /preparation and “lay the groundwork”.

Learning what we can gain from other disciplines – through talks, events, exhibitions, presentations, drama.

One person in the community can often be the catalyst for change – making connections with new museum user groups.

Council museums are developing new ways of learning, RPA and political dynamics of councils can make this difficult.

Acknowledgement of training needs – addressing wider context and handling contentious issues.

Museums have the professionalism to deliver civic leadership.

Using a range of effective practices – films, drama, road shows, living history.

Partnership and collaboration.

Methodologies explored– grassroots activities

Use of lectures, music, drama, and researching local connections to the period.

Greater awareness and interest “if we can tell stories in a respectful and unbiased manner we will have achieved great things here...we have a big project here but a very worthwhile one...’

Local connections and sourcing great stories about local people.

Use of drama to develop themes and empathy to fictionalise accounts without being inaccurate.

Small group discussions.

Personalities of the decade humanises the period and is a successful way to engage.

Community Engagement and empowerment is critical.

Methodologies explored - libraries

Libraries work very well as venues in which things happen; they act as enablers and facilitators not as teachers, not as experts; they provide the ‘safe space’, the ‘neutral space’; the reflection process at this time is very important and useful for Libraries to touch base with, link with and engage with other providers as partners.

Libraries report that more contemporary modes of communication also work well – via websites and other digital engagement: e.g. historical letters and other documents, books, other print or visual resources peculiar to libraries have worked very well online and when pushed out through social media.

Libraries partnership with Living Legacies has been a success. Engaging the two universities, PRONI, museums, libraries – full-day programmes of talks; digitising objects, with libraries as the venues, have all worked.

Dublin Belfast “*Two Cities One Book*” –developed connections with reading groups in Dublin.

Rural Community methodologies and perspectives explored

May 2017 RCN workshop.

Methods that worked well - workshops , drama, music and talks.

Rural communities “how they occupy the same space, practice means they slide over each other”.

Suggested themes included women, labour, Brexit British, Irish and European values, and propaganda.

Border and Brexit – voters took very different positions on this and so this is sensitive situation.

Utilise learning from Rural Enablers Programme.

Good practice projects - “*Personalities of the Decade*” by the Ethical and Shared Remembering Project and Co-operation Ireland’s programme.

Importance of education and curriculum links.

The complexity involved in acknowledging the years ahead and the creativity necessary to explore it represents an incredible opportunity.



Shared history explored

An increase in willingness, to share and commemorate together, to take a wider view on the First World War and to begin to dispel stereotypes.

Easter Rising and WWI history was introduced between communities. People more willing to engage with 'the other history' and it is working because people thought about it and people are being introduced to history they didn't know about – shared history is a positive.

People are taking part in commemoration across the board and are willing to share and commemorate history together.

People who are only becoming aware of their family's involvement in WWI and are very proud of this within both communities.

Awareness has percolated down to the grassroots level – people more likely to open up about commemoration which is a very positive impact. Very important that stereotypes are being dispelled.

People are starting to ask questions about this time because of the commemorations – more awareness.

'Shared history offers understanding but you don't have to agree'.

Leadership

The political context within which the decade of centenaries was acknowledged, as was the level of leadership at local council level by councillors and good relations programmes and council supported local museum services. It was suggested that the "population is now willing to engage in difficult conversations". However, there is not always the "confidence to bring the internal discussion in a safe space out in to the public domain". It was noted that the RPA set back some programmes and in a few instances led to concerns about fairness. Participants drew attention the importance of "critical distance". The Heritage Lottery Fund is important to the museum and heritage sector, especially in local government contexts as third party influence and funding allied to critical distance can make it easier to deliver impact in the context of the wider politics. Politically opportunities were perhaps missed to connect the Easter Rising and the First World War.

Measurement of Impact

Continued formal **evaluation** is needed "post-project evaluations, getting material published, using local papers for press and PR opportunities". There is also the need for **OBA based** evaluation/assessment of impact using the questions: *Did we treat you well? Did we help you with your problem?* Participants referenced the difficulties involved in measuring personal change, such as an "increase in tolerance of each other's perspective and respect for difference," of the long-term impact of "making people aware of their own history". Frequent and wide use of the **ethical guidelines and best practice guidelines** in Decade work may assist in gauging long-term impacts.

Participants drew attention to the context of religious, class and age divides and geography in terms of who is engaging and widening engagement. The learning journey detailed above can be seen as part of *community group learning* and underlines the degree to which *key individuals and group structures* in communities are motivated to become involved and can act as a catalyst for **greater community participation**.

In the case of the **Balmoral Review in May 2012** - people wanted it to go off well and then this was reciprocated. So indicated that there was going to be a need to do things well and they passed off without difficulties. "People have a vested interest in commemorations working well – but will only work if communities are engaged with it."

In terms of increasing **complexity** and the use of **multiple narratives**, success looks like preventing "the oversimplification of the narratives – the complexity has been drawn out". Moreover, "complexity has come from across the UK not just Northern Ireland i.e. objectors, ethnic stories, colonialism". There has been no room for the "mono-narrative".

The impact of a range of **methodologies and effective practice** "exhibitions, booklets, drama, using artefacts for storytelling, involvement of professional historians, talks and site visits and group discussions" were among the effective practices listed that secured wider engagement. *Work in small groups "enabled people to explore their own narrative to build confidence"*. These also "encouraged curiosity and breaking down barriers and attracting new visitors to museums.". The importance of uncovering the "local connections and setting this in the international context" was underlined. Some people are also "more comfortable in their own narrative" and questioned who is engaging.



Participants report that the decade engagement has led to real questions about the impact of war and violence on soldiers and their families; on the role of women in the First World War and the Easter Rising; about legacy and participants point to their greater understanding of trauma, mental health issues and the impact of physical injuries.

A key feature of the work on the decade has been the high level of **partnerships and collaborations** which “*worked very well. Each of them had a different capacity and making sure partners had clear project plans*”. Moreover, partners are gaining from other disciplines through talks, events, exhibitions, presentations and drama – and embedding this into their working practices.

Challenges Ahead: Workshop summary on the Legacy

The views of participants in terms of the legacy included “Legacy lies in facing the future” and that the decade of centenaries engagement will have resulted in “**breaking down barriers and building bridges**”. The need for “**safe cultural space**” was reiterated and in the potential for reconciliation “need to give people space **so everyone gets space** – narratives are acknowledged and validated”. People need to be able to explore their own narrative to build confidence. Where there has been safe space the outcomes of the project have been positive. The question of how potentially contentious or sensitive material or wider narratives can then be **shared with the wider community presents some difficulties**. At minimum this needs to be done in a protected space.

Embedding the **CRC/HLF principles and ethical frameworks** more broadly into organizations and museums could be a sustainable legacy. Another would be to develop new critical conversations. Still another would strengthen **civic leadership** about commemoration and history.

Suggested visions that placed us in an international context in the past and in the present included:

- Ireland is one part of a much wider world of conflict and resolution; and can be usefully approached from that international or global context. It should be

recognised always that Ireland is in the midst of world forces, historically and in our own day; that we are not unique; that our issues can be considered afresh by approaching them from those other contexts; that it is always a useful thing to illustrate the local or micro importance of global events; and vice versa; but never useful to anyone, personal or communal, to bury oneself in private bitterness and resentments and score-settling.

- A key question also is: what role does ‘Ireland’ and its conflicts and resolutions play on the world stage, in relation to other places and their complications.

Some of the challenges include:

- Keep momentum going so that in 2025 we should have a greater understanding?
- Seek greater engagement with young people, using appropriate methods.
- Family memories – How do we talk with our families, parents, grandparents? Could this be a pointer to future work? Successful methods include story-telling work.
- Leave room for quieter stories and those that need a safe space from which to emerge.
- Explore difficult and violent events without glorifying them.
- 1920’s very challenging period – how do we reach people who don’t know.
- Include the wider range of people from different nations and backgrounds in the engagement.

Museums and institutions, it is argued, need to be flexible when working with groups getting to engage. This is particularly the case as the readiness of local people to engage is part opportunity and part of the fear of engagement. Therefore, it is important need to reach out to people and be patient, ensure that there is a safe space and it can be more successful when the group is established.



In order to take this forward the following support needs were identified

- Resources developed continue to be available
- Provide new resources and develop network support
- New Toolkit
- Need a hub for shared resources
- Drama should be a resource
- Future – one challenge – training up to 1916 – low level of knowledge post 1916 – need to build up knowledge of this period
- Similar types of projects, programmes and events that they had for 1916 could be useful.
- There is a need for a range of tools to be placed at the disposal of museum professionals – films, site visits, road shows, living history. This includes knowledge and handling skills to support engagement with contentious history.
- Need to share existing good practice between local authorities and different parts of the museum service.
- This is a much less well-known period that we are heading into;
- We need the support and advice of historical experts.
- New knowledge, new research.
- Untold stories especially from local council areas, offer potential but we all need experts to offer a broader context.

Section 5

The Challenges Ahead: Roundtable discussion

The Decade Roundtable held a small group discussion on the challenges of the years ahead led by Eamon Phoenix and Johnston McMaster. This were an addition to the workshop discussions at the Lurgan, Belfast and Derry Londonderry events. Alan McCully's introduction provides an overview drawing together the common threads emerging from these and other perspectives. Some of the key themes have been set out in a grid below.

With numerous themes, it may well be difficult to develop guidance and resources to support community groups, groups that in many instances delivered programmes and projects on the ground in 2016. The challenge we face as a society is to provide multiple narratives and to avoid sectarianism. In engaging with community groups, the challenge is to support their empowerment. This was reinforced in the facilitated workshop discussions. The legacy of their involvement with the decade lies in exploring public history and taking a step forward in the process of reconciliation is critical. The principles, objects and memorabilia assist greatly in opening up conversations. As these conversations can be difficult, training in relation to addressing contentious and controversial issues would be helpful. A revised toolkit will support practice development. In public space and cultural institutions, more collections that are fluid can make possible the development of complex narratives. The importance of the international /national was also recognized. Finally, the context of commemoration of the centenaries has been changed by issues implicit in BREXIT.



EMERGING THEMES, SOURCES OF STORIES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

THEMES

FIRST WORLD WAR

- Battle of Messines 1917, Armistice Day 11 November 1918 (under Battle of Messines)

EVENTS IN IRELAND

- From the Irish Convention (August 1917-March 1918) to The Government of Ireland Act December 1920 and confirmation of partition December 1922
- 1919 the First Dail and the War of Independence /Anglo Irish War

Particular moments

- Craig Collins Pact March 1922
- Speech of King George at opening of new Northern Ireland Parliament in Belfast City Hall June 1922

Impact on Ulster and Partition

- The impact of the war of Independence on Northern Ireland and sectarian violence (1920-22)
- Rural and cross border experience and influences, trapped minorities
- The exodus of people north and south in the wake of partition
- History of Policing in Northern Ireland (1916-24), the RIC, Specials, RUC and An Garda Siochana

International context

- Paris Peace conference 1919 and international dimensions



END OF WAR

- 1918 general election and suffrage.
- The Rise of Sinn Fein Spanish Flu 1919

POST WAR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- Post war life for families, returned soldiers and workers
- Labour history
- Mass employment to mass unemployment, the situation of children, families and returned service men is again about the end of the war
- The post war slump

Links between different perspectives and narratives

- The return of soldiers is linked to the recruitment into the B Specials and the Black and Tans of demobilised soldiers
- The exclusion of trade unionists and Catholics among shipyard workers and the Belfast boycott are similarly linked
- The impact and extent of post-traumatic stress syndrome.
- Linen/Munitions industries, Doffers and Belfast Canaries, Singers in the street – War Veterans

INTERNATIONAL THEMES

Europe in 1918-23 was a cauldron

- the Russian revolution 2017
- the end of WW1 2018
- the flu pandemic

The Paris Peace conference in 2019

- 17 new nations established
- the volatilities of which continue



LEGACY OF THE DECADE AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

- The ethics of violence
- Engaging the root causes of past violence.
- Towards the common good
- Building of a pluralist democracy and civil society
- Patriarchy and violence
- Democratic foundations of two parliaments

CURRENT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL THEMES

- Religion, religious dynamics, influence of the 16th century Reformations
- Current international contexts such as Aleppo, remind us that we are not alone in facing these issues. While we should not avoid talking about the use of violence, it is a question of overcoming violence
- The omission of women from counts of the Rising may be linked to current understandings of “fake” news.
- Conflict and patriarchy
- Diversity and culture and identity



Sources of stories and potential of objects, the use of common ground venues, drama and different perspectives to humanise the history

The role of objects in opening up difficult conversations.

Archives - make the archive materials available and let people draw their own conclusions

Libraries are both a source of stories, are a place of common ground that is not threatening to individuals, and therefore create great potential for engagement and discussion

The recovery of women's stories around the era of the Easter Rising

Similarly, narratives about citizenship, the extension of the franchise, democratisation and children's stories can be researched and recovered using drama

Some other perspectives, rich sources of stories identified included

- influence of military service
- the rise of socialism i.e. the great strike of the ship yards in 1923 parallel to the Glasgow strike for a 44 hour week
- 100th anniversary of the Fireman's Union with structures reflecting the military service of the firemen
- the impact of social and economic issues and the election of 1/3rd of council positions by designated labour candidates
- the 1919 movement when workers were expelled from employment

Potentially useful

- Sound archives produced by the BBC include women talking about the hotels around Belfast Winifred Carney
- Interviews carried out by Bill Rolston in the 1930s when men talked about the 1920's
- Autobiography Robert McKelvey - Belfast lamplighter also covers this period

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Handling sensitive issues
- Memory, hidden history and memorabilia as a *fearful object*
- The role of objects in opening up difficult conversations
- Need to deploy ethical framework and principles to support those conversations and engagements



Section 6

Conclusion

The later years of the Decade of Centenary are characterised by increased conflict, polarisation and partition. It is our hope that the handling of contentious and sensitive issues, and narratives, in a creative way may create the opportunity for more thoughtful remembering. It is critical that the use of ethical principles and framework to unearth complicated history is continued. All the participants hoped that the legacy of the decade would lead to a more settled Northern Ireland, which embraces the process of reconciliation.

Our discussions highlighted the importance of opening up the archives so people can explore first-hand accounts themselves. In a similar vein, materials developed in the course of the Decade of Centenaries need to be curated properly and made accessible for future use.

The combined efforts of communities, arts organisations, cultural and heritage groups and agencies have collectively contributed to a regional approach in Northern Ireland and it is anticipated this will continue. It is worth considering the role that the Expert Advisory Group established by the government has played in the Republic, and if a similar group if established in, Northern Ireland could play a similarly constructive role.

This report has drawn on the considerable experience and expertise of historians, experts in various fields, facilitators, organisers and participants. When we collectively commenced the exploration of the Decade of Centenaries in 2011, it was with some trepidation. The use of the CRC/HLF Principles for remembering in public space and other ethical frameworks have proved helpful in guiding, supporting and reassuring commemorative activity. The positive role of the

principles, objects and memorabilia in opening up conversations was emphasized and ensuring that we continue to develop this approach.

Some of the key practice implications that emerged from the discussion centred on engagement. Personal stories connected to events are more likely to be successful in engagement terms. When people identify with a story, the best engagement happens. The arts, dialogue and discussion, objects and memorabilia combined with the use of safe spaces through which to explore our difficult past have proved particularly effective. Engagement strategies that recognise the validity of the learning journey and understand what motivates people to learn are more likely to be successful. It is also important to understand the purpose, motivation and /or intention of those organising events and of those who work with people in the community.

Through this period increased collaboration and partnership across sectors and groups has developed. This has also led to a greater appreciation of the broad range of methodologies available. These together with the broader perspectives that have developed on the Decade of Centenaries are becoming rooted into the working practices of museums, schools, libraries, councils and other agencies: and this is a great thing. More support is required to realize this potential in the longer term. There is a continuing need to support groups and agencies to develop sustainable skills in unearthing complicated history and in exploring multiple narratives and perspectives creatively in the community.

The presentations, case studies and workshop discussions are a record of the combined insights and expertise of those who took part in the three workshops as participants, facilitators and presenters and the members of the Decade Roundtable. Our thanks for these contributions, any errors are our own.

PRINCIPLES FOR REMEMBERING IN PUBLIC SPACE

1. Start from the historical **facts**;
2. Recognise the **implications** and **consequences** of what happened;
3. Understand that different **perceptions** and **interpretations** exist; and
4. Show how events and activities can deepen **understanding** of the period.
5. All to be seen in the context of an 'inclusive and accepting society'

THE PRINCIPLES REMAIN UNCHANGED.

The Decade Roundtable members reflected on these principles and their usefulness

They suggest that in the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries and beyond, these principles will continue to underpin programmes and projects, which will be no less challenging than what has already been undertaken thus far. It will be equally important that we are forward looking in how we remember, underlining the importance of continuing to unearth the complexities of our history. This will enable us to take on board new research, and continue to reflect critically on different interpretations of these momentous events in our shared history.

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