

World War Commemoration events/activities

The Memorial Arch, Step Short, Folkestone

The Memorial Arch in Folkestone, with a landscaped garden and visitor centre, will be the dominant feature of the planned Road of Remembrance restoration on the Leas. It is to be created as a fitting tribute to the 10 million men and women who marched along this famous thoroughfare to or from the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. It will also bring to life the part that Folkestone played in the Great War.

Each one of the millions of fighting men who marched through the town and down to the waiting boats on the harbour would have gone down "The Slope", as it was then known. At the top of the hill they would have heard the order "Step Short", an instruction to shorten their stride in order to negotiate the gradient safely.

The Memorial Arch itself will consist of a stainless Steel Centenary Arch 14m high and 12m wide across the base. The Arch will be illuminated internally and externally and includes the provision for audio visual presentations. A specially commissioned statue of a soldier cast in resin leans against the inside of the Arch, looking over the sea to the French Coast 21 miles away.

The Arch will stand in a landscape developed with the help of education and historical experts and will complement projects to make available on line the historic visitors' books from the former Harbour Canteen with over 50,000 names and to establish a Great War Visitors' Centre. A national curriculum lesson plan will also be created for schools visiting the site.

A major Step Short event will take place on the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, on 4 August.

National War Memorial, Dover

The National War Memorial to be constructed on Dover's White Cliffs at Western Heights seeks to commemorate the 1.7 million servicemen and women, merchant navy personnel and civilians who died in the service of this country in World War 1 and World War 2. The goal of the project is to have the Memorial in place for an opening on the 4th August.

The proposed site for the Memorial is the area surrounding Drop Redoubt. Designed by Craft:Pegg architects, it will take the form of 12 white granite walls stepping down the slope between Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft.

The Wing, Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, Capel-le-Ferne

The Wing is the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust's planned new building at the Capel-le-Ferne site of the National Memorial to the Few. It will take its place by the existing Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial Wall which lists the names of all those who took part in the Battle of Britain, while a replica Spitfire and Hurricane stand nearby as a reminder of the iconic machines they flew to victory. The project will be completed by Autumn 2014 ready for an official opening in July 2015, the Battle of Britain's 75th anniversary year.

Flying Memorial to the Few

Actions Stations!, a growing local business offering helicopter flights with a spitfire and hurricane, run by Steve Burt and operating from Pent Farm near Hythe, is working on a campaign to purchase a spitfire and other World War 2 planes for the county as a Flying Memorial to the Few.

Currently using planes from Duxford's Historic Aircraft Collection, Action Stations! would maintain and rent these planes, using them both for fly-bys at county events and for the Action Stations! business with flight times over key World War 2 sites published to enhance the experience of heritage visitors to the county. Longer term, the intention would be to employ mechanics and apprentices to maintain the planes which would operate from an area replicating the original Hawkinge Airport, perhaps at Folkestone Racecourse.

At present, Action Stations! is raising money for The Wing by making a donation per flight.

Heritage Hangar, Manston and Biggin Hill

The Heritage Hangar at Biggin Hill run by Peter Monk is the home to five flying spitfires, a hurricane and other World War 2 planes, plus others under restoration. These planes are privately owned but available for flypasts and events, including the County Show and to mark several forthcoming anniversaries. Around 8 people are employed on site, including apprentices.

The Heritage Hangar would like to expand into East Kent and is in negotiations with Manston Airport and the Spitfire & Hurricane Museum to have a working base, open to the public, to show the planes and workshop with access to Manston Airport for take-off and landing. They also plan to position their planes at other Kent airfields for educational purposes during school terms, with dates for flights coordinated with all the relevant museums and memorials, then scheduled accordingly. Two education days in advance of the Manston Air Show on 22nd June were highly successful.

There is also the potential for Spitfire flights to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and other major events.

War & Peace Revival

The War and Peace Revival (previously the War & Peace Show) has a new venue in 2013 at Folkestone Racecourse, previously RAF Westenhanger.

It is the world's largest military vehicle and militaria collectors fare, hosting more than 3,500 military vehicles. The annual 5 day festival offers education and entertainment, including a special schools day programme.

KCC has helped to develop opportunities for schools and education through the event which took place in July and again proved to be a huge visitor attraction, and will continue to do so.

Royal British Legion Memorial Garden

KCC works closely with the Royal British Legion and with Royal British Legion Industries which was established in 1919 to provide support for disabled ex-servicemen returning from the first World War. Its core values and objectives today remain unchanged and RBLI has evolved, now providing employment support to those with a disability or health condition, regardless of service connection.

The Royal British Legion Memorial Garden is set in the heart of the Royal British Legion Village in Aylesford and is in need of refurbishment to extend its use beyond the service on Remembrance Sunday.

The Legion's plans will keep some of the original features, including the memorial and remembrance plaques but the space will be opened up to provide for full disabled access, a bandstand, fixed seating, a small parade ground and areas of relaxation.

The project has the support of the Chairman of Kent County Royal British Legion who has suggested the new Garden would be a venue for the Royal British Legion's County Parade and their other ceremonial events. It's believed that a refurbished garden as a place of remembrance and reflection is a suitable project for the RBLI to mark the World War 1 Centenary.

Royal British Legion Industries and The Royal British Legion both came into existence to look after the wounded of the First World War and their work has continued through all conflicts to the present day.

Schools

As would be expected, KCC's Education, Learning and Skills is already closely involved in school and community preparations for the commemorations, particularly related to World War 1.

As well as being actively involved in the Frontline Kent Steering Group to ensure that opportunities are made available to schools to enrich their curriculum on this

important subject, the directorate has also been successful in securing funding for a small European funded project through the Comenius programme. This is bringing together three Kent Schools with three in Flanders aimed at developing the research skills of the pupils as they track individual servicemen who fought on the Western Front. Following an approach by the Regional Government of Flanders, an Interreg funding bid has also been developed on this collaboration. Various other avenues are being explored by the ELS directorate to raise awareness of opportunities for young people and their families to engage in learning activities about the Great War together, possibly utilising Kent Children's University Passport to Learning scheme. This support has also been offered to other local groups and organisations including the Step Short project.

Members may be interested to know that on 19 December five pupils and their teachers from the Pent Valley Technology College in Folkestone visited a number of sites around Ypres as part of KCC's EU-funded education project on the First World War. They engaged with their Flemish counterparts, and met the Prime Minister in the Tyne Cot cemetery.

Communities

Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) will use the opportunity to showcase Kent's rich historic collections relating to 1914-18. The service is part of a national libraries partnership with the Imperial War Museum which will encourage the public to engage with the online *Lives of the First World War* project which aims to record the stories of people who lived, worked and fought during the war. It is also supporting major projects across the county including Step Short, the Defence of Swale and Thanet Remembers and other local community-led initiatives.

The Kent History and Library Centre is actively involved with Football and Peace , this project will use the iconic 1914 Christmas Day truce as a vehicle to explore the relationship between sport and the First World War. The National Children's Football Alliance, (based at Kings Hill) has been awarded Heritage Lottery funding of £32,500 and will involve pupils from three schools researching the impact of the War in a partnership with LRA, Maidstone United Football Club and Maidstone Museum. The project will culminate in an exhibition at the Gallagher Stadium in April 2014.

Volunteers are being recruited to support a range of activities in libraries including activities focussed on the literature of the First World War and a major exhibition at the History and Library Centre. Staff and volunteers have developed a Kent First World War Timeline for the Frontline Kent partnership. LRA is also keen to research the role and contribution of KCC 1914-19 which could culminate in an exhibition at Sessions House

Frontline Kent/Spitfire Coast and the Frontline Kent Group

Visit Kent's major initiative to support the commemorations will be the "Frontline Kent" visitor campaign. Still under development, the campaign will run in 2015, the anniversary of the ending of World War 2.

The Frontline Kent Group which met after the Kent Tourism Conference now encapsulates initial ideas around the Spitfire Coast aimed at bringing together Kent's World War sites and initiatives to heighten the county's offer to attract the heritage tourist and add value to the time they spend in the county.

This Group has met several times and includes representatives from KCC Education, Communities, Regeneration, the Lord Lieutenancy, press and key World War 1 and World War 2 initiatives. As a result of the last meeting, it was agreed that it should be part of the wider Kent and Medway Museums Partnership initiative chaired by Professor Mark Connolly from the University of Kent which is currently collating all information across Kent to build a diary of activity.

Working within this wider group, Visit Kent will be looking at areas of product development, developing a marketing campaign around anniversary led tourism, exploring feasibility of HLF funding and other sources of funding from the private and public sector, developing partnerships with key carriers, media partners who have access to a wide variety of content, stories and add value to campaign development.

"Co-ordinating Centre to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War"

Historians from the University of Kent, University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church University, University of Sussex, University of Brighton and the University of Southampton were successful in bidding as a consortium to establish a Coordinating Centre at the University of Kent, led by Professor Mark Connelly. This will be one of 5-7 regional hubs which will manage, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, community projects connected with the First World War centenary. The primary aims of the project are to build a dialogue between academic and public historical research, and to assist communities in exploring their heritage.

The Co-ordinating Centres will be expected to act as beacons for community outreach, engagement and collaboration at a local/regional and a UK-wide scale between research organisations and researchers and community groups, including young people, who are interested in researching and commemorating the First World War, the broader historical and cultural context of the War and its legacy and impact. Over the longer term, these Centres are intended to lay the foundation for the creation of sustainable relationships and practices that systematically build dialogue between academic and public historical research.

The Centres will operate in co-operation with other major project partners in the heritage sector such as museums and archives. This will be done by a range of activities including:

- A website to coordinate and inform the Centre's network;

- Open lectures, seminars and conferences on war-related subjects;
- Family history workshops;
- Tours of archives and relevant collections;
- Information events and open days;
- Self-tour guides to the battlefields and significant war-related locations;
- Visits to schools, colleges and community centres; and
- Providing advice on further bids to the Heritage Lottery fund

Second World War sites in Kent

In addition to the above, due to its frontline position, Kent has many Battle of Britain sites including the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, Manston and Lydd airports, Lashenden, Brenzett, Shoreham and Rochester Airport, together with St Georges Chapel at Biggin Hill, Dover Castle and the City of Canterbury which suffered heavy bombing.

Currently, joint working between the sites appears limited, offering a major opportunity to package Kent's offer to visitors to the county for the forthcoming commemorations.