

COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR:

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION GROUP – FIFTH MEETING

14:00 – 15:30, Friday 23 January 2015

Video Conference:

Room 15, Welsh Government office, Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth
Room 3.020, Welsh Government office, Cathays Park (CP2), Cardiff
VC Room, Welsh Government office, Penrallt, Caernarfon

Present:

Cardiff:

[St Cyres School Official 1] ([job title redacted] St Cyres School, Penarth)
[Swansea University Official 1] (Swansea University)
[RWF Trust Official 1] Royal Welch Fusiliers Trust
[Welsh Government Official 1] (Welsh Government)

Aberystwyth:

[NLW Official 1] (Retired [job title redacted] – National Library of Wales)
[Aberystwyth University Official 1] (Aberystwyth University)

Caernarfon:

[AC-NMW Official 1] ([job title redacted] National Slate Museum)

Apologies:

Professor Sir Deian Hopkin (First Minister's Expert Adviser on the First World War)
[British Council Official 1] (Chair, British Council)
[Bangor University Official 1] (Bangor University)
[WFA Official 1] (Chair, Western Front Association, Gwent Branch)
[Cardiff University Official] (Cardiff University)

1. Welcome and minutes of previous meeting

[St Cyres School Official 1] welcomed group members to the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. Swansea University Official 1] asked that an amendment be made to page 3 – funding is available to be applied for to hold conferences from September 2015.

2. Update on the Wales at War Educational App –[St Cyres School Official 1] and Swansea University Official 1]

[Name redacted] has now been appointed as Project Manager. The testing phase will begin today (23 January) and the teachers who are involved will have access to the material from next Friday onwards. The testing phase will involve 6 schools,

including a mix of both Welsh and English-medium secondary and primary schools. The app will be free to all at point of delivery.

The app has a generic backbone of content and the project team will include a Welsh context, highlighting events which are of particular interest to Wales, with links to newspaper reports on specific themes on the Cymru 1914 website.

3. Commemoration of the role of the Welsh at Gallipoli - [St Cyres School Official 1]

The second meeting of the Gallipoli working group took place on 4 December. Three new members were welcomed to the group: [Name redacted] of Gallipoli & Dardanelles International, [Name redacted] of the Gallipoli 100 education project and [Name redacted] who has an interest in the Gallipoli Campaign having been born in Turkey and now lives in north Wales. [Name redacted] designed and erected the Gallipoli 1915 Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

[Welsh Government Official 1] explained that the National Service of Remembrance in north Wales will no longer be going ahead. Instead, the main Gallipoli commemorative event will be a touring exhibition. The intention is to produce a panel exhibition which will open in Penmaenmawr in early August, before moving to another location in north Wales (possibly Caernarfon), one in mid Wales and one in south Wales. Educational resources will be developed to complement the touring exhibition, as well as an online exhibition.

Action: CyMAL to circulate a copy of the Gallipoli Action Plan to members of the Historical Interpretation Working Group for them to provide their comments.

4. Christmas Truce Project – [RWF Trust Official 1]

The Christmas Truce exhibition has now toured Saxony, Armentières, Ploegsteert and Frelinghien. A series of events were held in Frelinghien during the week commencing 16 December, including a football match between the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Jäger Battalion which the Germans won 2-1. The grandsons of the original commanding officers were present and shook hands on the same spot that their forefathers had previously done. Events in Frelinghien were filmed and the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum is keen to produce a half hour video of the proceedings.

The exhibition is now on display at Bodelwyddan Castle and was opened by the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. The launch event was also attended by a delegation from Saxony. It is very encouraging that more than 1,000 bookings have already been made by school groups. The exhibition will remain in Bodelwyddan until April, when a smaller version of the exhibition will travel to National Museum Cardiff. The exhibition could travel again after Cardiff if any other museums have an interest in hosting it.

5. Historical Conference – [Swansea University Official 1]

The intention is to hold a conference in Swansea in July 2016. If funding can be secured, this will be one of 5 conferences across the UK, with the Swansea conference focusing on 'Work and Play', looking at how communities' lives were

changed by the war. For example, there could be a sporting theme to get the public involved, perhaps involving Swansea RFC. [AC-NMW Official 1] pointed out that [AC-NMW Official 2] [job title redacted] National Waterfront Museum, is keen to provide assistance with venues and support and Swansea University Official 1] agreed to contact him.

Once funding has been secured for the conference in 2016 Swansea University will be able to start looking at possibilities for a further conference in 2018. [Swansea University Official 1] asked the group to consider what themes a conference in 2018 should consider.

- [St Cyres School Official 1] felt that it would be important to look back at the 4 years of the commemoration to consider what has been achieved, what messages got across to the public successfully and what could have been done better
- [Swansea University Official 1] and [RWF Trust Official 1] both felt that it would be important to dispel myths surrounding opposition to the war, arguing that it wasn't until 1929/30 that opposition to the war come to the fore. [Aberystwyth University Official 1] countered that support for the war had quickly dissipated and that pacifists were elected in 1923
- There was a consensus that the 2018 conference should give an interpretation of the war and how it affected Wales
- [RWF Trust Official 1] suggested that the 2018 conference could include a focus on generalship, and how generalship changed during the First World War.

[Swansea University Official 1] asked if Welsh Government funding is available for a conference in 2018. [Welsh Government Official 1] replied that resources for 2018 have not yet been allocated and that he would get back to [Swansea University Official 1] in due course.

6. Any Other Business

In Parenthesis

[RWF Trust Official 1] reported back on a recent meeting that he attended to discuss the Welsh National Opera's (WNO) *In Parenthesis* production, which was also attended by representatives from the National Library, National Museum, Arts Council Wales, Literature Wales and the Wales Millennium Centre. The production is the centrepiece in a series of events to commemorate the Battle of Mametz Wood, which will also include educational activities, writing workshops and an exhibition which is being produced by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. The opening of the opera has been brought forward to 13 May 2016 at the Wales Millennium Centre and following further performances in Cardiff the production will then travel to Birmingham and London.

The group felt that it would be useful if the Welsh Government could arrange planning meetings to discuss both the commemoration of the Battle of Mametz, and 2017 commemorative events (such as Passchendaele and Hedd Wyn, links with Ireland and Francis Ledwidge, the Battle of Gaza etc) in detail, in the same way as meetings were arranged to discuss the commemoration of Gallipoli and Jutland.

[RWF Trust Official 1] suggested that the Mametz group could be largely made up of the same organisations represented in the WNO's meeting, with a few additions.

Action: CyMAL to explore the possibility of establishing working groups to discuss the commemoration of both the Battle of Mametz Wood, and commemorative activities in 2017, including the death of Hedd Wyn and the Battle of Passchendaele.

The group congratulated [Aberystwyth University Official 1] on the publishing of his new book *Wales and World War One*.

7. Date of the next meeting

Welsh Government officials will circulate suitable dates for the next meeting.

January 2015