



## ***Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers**



**1914 - 1918**

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### *Framework Programme for the Commemoration in Wales*

#### **Foreword Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM First Minister of Wales**

As we approach the centenary of the First World War it is fitting that we reflect on this overwhelming event which led to tremendous sacrifice and bravery on the battlefield and quiet heroism on the Home Front. The period from 1914 to 1918, and the immediate aftermath, shaped the Wales we live in now and we need to understand not only why nations went to war but also the lingering impact of that war on our daily lives. After the war people expected better lives and better government to deliver health services and homes 'fit for heroes'. The confidence which many women had gained in carrying out vital jobs at home led to renewed calls for the right to vote. These aspirations were sadly not always met, or else were achieved slowly, however the lives of everyone were changed by the long and arduous war whether through personal loss, economic circumstance or technological change.

I want these commemorations to reach out to people of all ages to encourage them to take an interest, whether it be in the history of their own families or communities or in national and international events. Wars are sadly still a part of our world and young people can take a great deal from understanding the causes and impact of the 'Great War' into how we should resolve conflict in our own time. The Commemoration Programme in Wales will involve individuals, families, schools, local organisations as well as our national institutions, armed services and cultural bodies. It is intended to be a framework of activities and events stimulated by debate and discussion as well as an appropriate commemoration of important events such as the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 where Hedd Wyn lost his life without knowing that he had won Wales' greatest poetry prize, the National Eisteddfod Chair. That empty chair, draped in black, symbolised all the other empty chairs in homes all over Wales.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to get involved in our Programme which will begin in August 2014. Consider developing your own projects or activities, researching your local war memorial for the stories of those who tragically died, visiting the exhibitions and events which will be interpreting Wales's contribution to the War effort and contributing to the digital archive which I want to be a permanent legacy of these commemorations. I look forward to a commemoration in Wales which will bring people together to pay tribute to those Welsh people whose hard work and sacrifice is justly remembered by us all.

#### **Why is it important to commemorate the First World War?**

#### **Professor Sir Deian Hopkin, First Minister's Expert Adviser**

In August 2014 we will be embarking on a four-year period of centennial commemoration to mark the series of events, military, political, social and economic, which collectively amount to the First World War.

During these years of commemoration we will be reflecting on many aspects of the war and considering what it meant to the people of Wales, those who fought, on land, sea and air, and too often died, those who survived but were seriously damaged physically and mentally, but also those who served in wartime occupations or simply “kept the home fires burning”. We will also be reflecting on the challenge to conscience and belief which the war entailed for those who resisted the war or declined to participate for religious and political reasons.

The momentous military engagements of the war have long attracted the attention of historians, biographers and novelists as well as film and television directors. The literary output, from the memoirs of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon to the poetry of Wilfred Owen, has become part of our literary canon. Social historians have explored the domestic impact of the war, while diplomatic and political historians have debated the cause and effect of these far-reaching developments.

The greatest legacy which these commemorations can have is to educate the nation, young and old, so that we can all gain a better understanding and appreciation of the First World War, an historical epoch which still leaves its mark on our present society.

## **Wales in 1914**

In the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War Wales, like the rest of Britain, was experiencing both modest economic prosperity and, by contrast, political and social upheaval. On the one hand this was a period of intellectual vibrancy, exciting technological development and a sense of change, progress and momentum. On the other hand, the years from 1910 to 1914 have been described by historians as the era of “The Great Unrest”. Trade unionists, organised in ever more powerful unions, were engaged in bitter disputes with their employers, some of which had led to serious confrontations with the army and police, as in Tonypandy in 1910 and Llanelli in 1911.

Women suffragettes were campaigning for the vote, often using unexpectedly direct methods while in Ireland tension between Home Rulers and Unionists was mounting alarmingly. More generally, international relations were turbulent, and mutual suspicion between great alliances led to an unprecedented arms race and dangerous military strategies. Yet, the outbreak of war came as a surprise, not least the rapid escalation from a regional dispute in the Balkans into a world conflict and one which confounded all the prognostications in August 1914 that it would “all be over by Christmas”. Understanding the course of events, their causes and the context in which they took place, must be a central part of the centenary commemorations, above all locating the Welsh experience in these momentous developments.

## **Impact of war**

Wales in the years after 1918 was a changed society. Whether this was due to the impact of the war itself or whether the war accelerated processes already in train is a matter of historical debate. But the change was manifest, not least in politics. The extension of the franchise in 1918 trebled the electorate, gave women the vote for the first time and led, within a very few years, to a fundamental change in political power with Labour replacing the Liberals as the main alternative to the Conservatives in Wales as elsewhere, a shift which has persisted to the present day. A new awareness of international politics was evident, as witnessed by the establishment of the first ever Professorial Chair in the subject at Aberystwyth in 1919. Mass mobilisation and military service abroad had broadened the vistas of many people who would otherwise have hardly ventured beyond

their locality but it also made them acutely aware of the perils of war. The search for peace became a powerful theme in the 1920s and 1930s encapsulated by the optimism of the League of Nations and its associated international agencies. At the same time, there was an outburst of creative optimism, perhaps stimulated by the horrors of war. Meanwhile technological developments, introduced or enhanced for military purposes, began to influence everyday life; motor vehicles, the radio, new medical treatments and much more. The Government's pledge for "Homes fit for Heroes" contributed to a huge wave of urban construction and development. The experience of war created a new resolve for a better society. In reflecting on this during the centennial period, it is important to appreciate all these significant changes but at the same time to why, in the end, the First World War was not also "the war to end all wars."

## ***Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918 Framework Programme**

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aim will be to deliver a successful and memorable commemoration in Wales which enables everyone to participate at a time and in a way which best suits their interests and aspirations.

There are many perspectives on the causes and the course of the War as well as the transformational impact it had on life in Wales. The objectives for the Programme will be:-

- to identify and mark significant anniversaries, working with Welsh organisations and services, other UK Home Nations and international partners
- to support an educational programme which encourages schools and young people's organisations to fully participate in commemorative activities
- to develop and support productive partnerships to deliver activities and events throughout the commemorative period to diverse audiences
- to support vibrant cultural and historical interpretation events and activities by our cultural and heritage bodies reflecting different perspectives on the period
- to work with the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders to support community projects telling the story of Wales and the First World War
- to ensure that information about the Commemoration in Wales is easily available to everyone within Wales and beyond
- to leave a rich digital legacy of the Commemoration for future generations

### **How the Programme will be organised**

The delivery of the Programme will reflect the strong partnership ethos which emerged from the initial planning events held in early 2013. Over 150 people representing 75 organisations discussed how the Commemoration in Wales could be a catalyst for projects and events which not only recognised the historical significance of the Commemoration but also demonstrated its relevance to contemporary Wales.

The approach for the Programme will be to encourage partnerships which focus on aspects of the First World War in Wales. These could involve new activities or take the form of a particular focus at existing events during the period from 2014 to 2018 – agricultural shows, eisteddfodau, cultural and religious festivals, sporting events and historical re-inactions. In addition, annual programmes organised by community organisations and societies could involve an event which investigates the First World War

in their area of interest.

## **Programme Website**

A website and associated social media, *Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918 ([www.walesremembers.org](http://www.walesremembers.org)) will provide information, a calendar of events, relevant news, project information, funding information and signposting services for activities relevant to Wales. The website will provide links to other useful information sources, including the Imperial War Museums Centenary Partnership website ([www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org)). For individuals and organisations wishing to get advice on how to start investigating a project idea, the website will provide access to 'how to ..' guides from the relevant specialists. This information will no doubt be augmented by practical advice as Commemoration activities are delivered and experiences shared.

The website will be developed by the People's Collection Wales, a digital platform for Welsh history and culture managed as a joint service by Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, the National Library of Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). At the conclusion of the Commemoration, this digital legacy will be preserved for the nation and form part of the Hwb educational digital service for Wales.

## ***Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914 – 1918 Programme Board**

A wide-ranging Programme Board has been established to support Sir Deian in his advisory role and monitor the delivery of the Framework Programme. There are representatives from Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, National Library of Wales, Arts Council Wales, the Army in Wales, the Royal Navy, the Royal British Legion, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Eisteddfod, Cytûn, Imperial War Museums, BBC Cymru Wales, S4C, the British Council, Welsh Local Government Association, Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW), the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum Trust and the Welsh Government. The Board meets every two months and is chaired by Sir Deian Hopkin. Sir Deian also represents Welsh interests on an UK Advisory Group

Individual work groups to progress the co-ordination of educational resources, historical interpretation, communication and community-based activities have been established. The aim will be to ensure that the framework for the Programme clarifies who is doing what and how everyone can get involved.

## **The Scope of Programme Activities**

All events of the period are potentially within the scope of the Commemoration. However there will be a particular emphasis on key commemorative dates. Initial events which have been identified for commemoration include:-

- ✧ *4 August 2014*: Britain declares war on Germany following its invasion of Belgium. This will be commemorated by a Commonwealth Service in Glasgow Cathedral. Members of the public will be invited to participate in a candlelit vigil in the evening, extinguishing the candles at 11pm symbolising the light going out all over Europe.
- ✧ *31 October 2014*: Centenary of the Battle of Ghuilvelt where the refurbished memorial to the South Wales Borderers will be unveiled on the battlefield.

- ✧ *8 May 2015*: Monmouthshire Regiment's stand at the second Battle of Ypres.
- ✧ *9 August 2015*: 53rd Welsh Division land at Gallipoli
- ✧ *31 May 2016*: Welsh sailors take part in the Battle of Jutland
- ✧ *1-14 July 2016*: First Battle of the Somme including the engagement by the 38<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Division at Mametz Wood.
- ✧ *31 July 2017*: Battle of Passchendaele including the engagement by the 38<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Division at Pilckem Ridge where Hedd Wyn is killed.
- ✧ *11 November 2018*: Armistice Day when the Allied forces and Germany sign the Armistice at Compiègne ending the fighting at 11am.

### **Stimulating Interesting Ideas**

The Commemoration Programme Board will be keen to encourage imaginative ideas for projects which stimulate interest in Wales and the First World War. Welsh Government funding for the Commemoration will be mainly found from existing budgets and grant schemes. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced that £6million will be available from 2013 to 2019 to support projects in the UK. In addition, other HLF grant programmes will consider First World War projects. HLF recently announced the first successful Welsh project, 'Brecon Remembers' which will investigate the stories of the 119 men on the Brecon war memorial. Swansea University has also received HLF funding to digitise the cartoons of Joseph Staniforth which appeared throughout the War in the Western Mail newspaper. The Armed Services in Wales have an important story to tell about the conflict and projects under discussion include developing a trenches experience in partnership with Bodelwyddan Castle, Denbighshire on the site of practice trenches dug by First World War soldiers.

### **Original Voices**

In order to provide historical material for public use, the National Library of Wales and partners will be completing a major digitisation project during the Autumn of 2013 which will provide 190,000 pages of texts, 50 hours of audio and 20 hours of film relating to the First World War in Wales as it affected all aspects of Welsh life, language and culture. The records include the records of the Welsh Corps, Welsh newspapers during the period 1913-1918, diaries, and letters, and oral history recorded by the BBC and the South Wales Miners Library. The archives of major First World War poets in Welsh collections will also be made available for educational use. This digital archive will be a major resource for schools, organisations and individuals in developing their projects and events.

Between September 2013 and May 2014 the National Library of Wales will stage an exhibition to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of former Prime Minister David Lloyd George, which will include papers from the National Library's seven discrete archives of correspondence and papers relating to Lloyd George, and also personal items from the Lloyd George Museum. The Library will also stage a major exhibition in 2016 on the theme of Mametz Wood. This will be based on work by the photographer Aled Rhys Hughes, inspired by David Jones's 'In Parenthesis' that is part of the Library collection. There will be multimedia components of the exhibition, and it is being developed in consultation with academic experts on the topic.

## **Stories from the Past**

Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales is developing an exciting programme of exhibitions and events interpreting different aspects of the period from the cloth used for Welsh army uniforms, to the importance of Welsh industry for the war effort, the changing role of women, and the skill of Welsh miners who were responsible for digging tunnels under the German lines. The North Wales Slate Museum will investigate the attitudes of opponents to the War and the influence of Non-Conformity in that debate. A major exhibition will interpret the tremendous creative power which the experiences of war unleashed in Welsh artists and writers.

## **Debating the War**

The centenary of the First World War provides an important opportunity to reflect on the different views held on the significance of the First World War for Welsh history. A major Welsh historical conference planned for 2016 at Cardiff University will invite leading historians of the period to debate the issues.

## **Researching, Repairing and Restoring Our War Memorials**

Working with the War Memorials Trust and One Voice Wales which represents Welsh Community Councils, the Programme will extend the grant scheme managed by Cadw to ensure that local war memorials are maintained and preserved as a lasting memorial to the sacrifice of Welsh men and women. Local schools and community organisations will be encouraged to research the stories of the individuals included on local memorials. These stories will form part of the digital legacy of the commemorations and the People's Collection Wales will provide support to capture the stories for future generations.

## **The Story of Hedd Wyn**

Yr Ysgwrn, Trawsfynydd, Gwynedd was the family farm of the First World War poet, Hedd Wyn, who was killed at Passchendaele without knowing that he had won Wales' greatest poetic prize at the National Eisteddfod. His empty bardic chair, draped in black, was one of Wales' iconic images of the First World War. The farm has been purchased for the nation through a National Heritage Memorial Fund grant and with support from the Welsh Government. The Snowdonia National Park is preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish an interpretation centre on the First World War at Yr Ysgwrn, to be opened in 2017 to mark the centenary of Hedd Wyn's death.

The tremendous impact of the First World War on Welsh life and society has stimulated a high level of interest in the forthcoming commemoration from all over Wales. Numerous local projects are already under way or planned. The War affected every family and community in some way and the Commemoration period provides an opportunity to draw people together to better understand the history of the period and the lessons for contemporary Wales today.

## **Links Beyond Wales**

The Commemoration provides opportunities for Wales to reinforce links with activities within the UK and beyond, and to promote the history and culture of Wales to new audiences. A partnership with the community of Langemark in Flanders, Belgium is developing a new national memorial for all Welsh casualties of the First World War, near the place where the poet Hedd Wyn was killed in July 1917. The existing dragon memorial to the soldiers of the 38<sup>th</sup> Welsh Regiment in Mametz, France will be restored in time for the centenary of the battle in July 2016.

A shared interest in family history provides opportunities to link with other countries, including the Commonwealth, and explore the stories of Welsh people across the world. The potential for Welsh schools to develop international links will be actively pursued and early discussions are under way to join European commemorative activities, for example under the aegis of the British Council in Wales.

**Commemorating the Christmas Truce of 1914.** The Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum is developing a joint exhibition commemorating the Christmas Truce of 1914 with the Saxony Regimental Museum, Dresden and the French municipality of Armentieres. The project will tell the story of the brief lull in the fighting at Christmas 1914 in Armentieres when gifts were exchanged between soldiers on both sides. The exhibition will be displayed in Cardiff after visiting Armentieres and Dresden with educational resources developed interpreting the event.

## **Wales Remembers, the Legacy**

For the Welsh Government, the Commemoration Programme in Wales is characterised by a determination to involve everyone, either within their local community, or contributing to national events and activities. Our approach is to encourage all interested people to work together and create a worthwhile legacy of our collective histories. To ensure that the events, activities and research are preserved for the future, a digital record will be produced as a legacy of how Wales remembered the First World War, one hundred years on.

## **Contacts**

If you would like to contact us please e-mail [cymruncofio-walesremembers1914-1918@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cymruncofio-walesremembers1914-1918@wales.gsi.gov.uk), or telephone 0300 062 2112.

The Programme Board brings together key organisations from across Wales to support the First World War centenary commemoration in Wales. Organisations currently represented on the Programme Board are as follows:

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales: <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/>

Archives and Records Council Wales: <http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/>

Arts Council Wales: <http://www.artswales.org.uk/>

Cytûn: <http://www.cytun.org.uk/>

Heritage Lottery Fund: <http://www.hlf.org.uk/InYourArea/Wales/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

Imperial War Museums: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/>

Imperial War Museums Centenary Partnership: <http://www.1914.org/>

National Library of Wales: <http://www.llgc.org.uk/>

Royal Navy: <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/>

S4C: [http://www.s4c.co.uk/hafan/e\\_index.shtml](http://www.s4c.co.uk/hafan/e_index.shtml)

The Army in Wales: <http://www.army.mod.uk/structure/28224.aspx>

The National Eisteddfod of Wales: <http://www.army.mod.uk/structure/28224.aspx>

The Royal British Legion: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>

The Royal Welch Fusiliers Regimental Museum: <http://www.rwfmuseum.org.uk/>

Welsh Government: <http://wales.gov.uk/?lang=en>

Welsh Local Government Association: <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english>

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