



Spirit of Wartime Sherwood
Interim Report April 2022
By



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1. Executive Summary

The *Spirit of Sherwood* National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) project has made good progress in working towards fulfilling the project aims. The on-going pandemic has present challenges to engagement and developing partnerships, but by changing approaches to delivering the intended outcomes the project has moved forward.

The project started six months later than planned, so the Community Education and Engagement Officer was therefore not appointed until September 2020. Starting the project six months into the pandemic had a major impact on developing partnerships and engaging with different communities. Whenever possible the Community Education and Engagement Officer has adapted the engagement programme to enable the project to proceed. A good example of this is the programme of talks that had been designed to take place at different venues in the Sherwood Forest area. With the implementation of the pandemic lockdowns the programme was adapted to be delivered online. The result was a well attended set of talks that has continued after the lockdown period, as families and individuals have found the online approach preferable to travelling to different venues that are not always convenient. The added value of the talks has been the ability of individuals with connections to Sherwood Forest and its World War II history, there are no longer living in the area or even in the UK, being able to attend.

There is a strong commitment to creating a tangible project legacy and Sherwood Forest Trust see working with partners as a core part of delivering not only the aims of the project but the project legacy. Time and energy has been spent on finding valuable partners and developing relationships. Unfortunately, the pandemic has meant that there have been changes and some partners have not been able to continue with the project. However, partnership work still continues and the Trust now has thirteen partners helping them deliver various strands of the project and they have also created engagement resources that will go beyond the lifetime of the project.

Overall the project is delivering on its aims and NLHF Approved Purposes. The archaeological work is now making good progress, the schools programme has expanded to develop a new and growing audience with the Home Education families, and there is a growing awareness of the World War II history and how it connects to long standing Eastern European communities in and around the Sherwood Forest area. An important legacy of this project will be that individuals who did not feel they had a voice are now sharing their history and experiences with the project team and other communities.

2. Introduction and purpose of the report

This is the midterm evaluation report of 'The Spirit of Wartime Sherwood' National Lottery Heritage Fund project. The purpose of this report is to inform the project team on the progress of the project particularly in regard to the project aims and outcomes. This report will mainly focus on engagement with audiences and partners and the changes to the project delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Sherwood Forest Trust is a small but dedicated charity, established in 1995. The Trust's work centres on nature, people and local communities. Trust projects range from heathland restoration and woodland creation to involving people with hands-on archaeology and history.

The HF project aims to celebrate the history of Wartime Sherwood through focusing on different engagement programmes. Based on a Prisoner of War site in north Nottinghamshire, the project will engage local people and school children with the site through historical and archaeological techniques, developing their knowledge of the local area and its history. The project aims to have an inclusive multi-cultural approach, welcoming contributions but not exclusively from, the Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian communities, many of which exist in Nottinghamshire because of World War II (overall a wider range of people will be involved).

The huge public interest in the 2018 World War 1 commemorations demonstrated to the Trust the enthusiasm that exists to find out more about Britain's twentieth century wartime history. It was thought that the project was likely to have broad local appeal, providing learning opportunities for all ages and the chance to get 'hands on' with history. In particular the aim was to celebrate important World War II anniversaries including the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings, the 80th commemoration of the outbreak of World War II and the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.

Project aims:

1. To share the role of Sherwood in the Allied narrative of the Second World War.
2. To encourage greater discussion and the sharing of war time experiences between people of different ages, abilities and cultures across the Sherwood community.
3. To facilitate a range of education and learning tools and opportunities for use by people of different ages, abilities and cultures across the Sherwood community and beyond.
4. To build new and sustainable partnerships and relationships with local communities and organisations who share our interests.
5. To celebrate a 'Spirit of Wartime Sherwood' legacy element to keep the memories alive and ensure the research completed through the project is available for future use.

Statement by Susie Johns (Community Education and Engagement Officer)

The Spirit of Wartime Sherwood Project is an opportunity to engage not just those with an established interest in the Second World War, but those who feel under-represented in its widely accepted narrative, those who feel history “isn’t for them”, and those who have little prior knowledge of their local heritage. The use of history as a tool to learn about social issues in the present, to reflect on morality and justice, and to appreciate community and diversity is integral to the project for all those who engage with it, whether consciously or not. History is also great for cross-curricular learning, and this is consistently considered when engaging with young people and families to ensure maximum value is gained from experiences. Every activity’s potential to add additional growth is thought about and these opportunities are implemented wherever possible for individuals and partners. For example, the archaeology activities have been promoted from the angle of historic interest but also well-being for veterans and neuro-diverse groups in the Forest.

When approaching potential partners, I have tried to find those who would benefit most from involvement with the project such as schools with high levels of indices of deprivation and English as a second language and marginalised groups such as Home Education families. I consistently try to engage harder to reach audiences and target non-traditional heritage participants as these individuals often find themselves feeling excluded from heritage activities or perceive that history is not inclusive. I use a range of marketing methods and materials to try to encourage participation as well as approaching existing specialist groups.

The choices I have made in facilitating activities and approaching partners have been dedicated to building meaningful, positive and inclusive relationships who will benefit from the project in the longer term as well as from their immediate involvement. For me, this was compounded in the emotional and powerful experience of the communal sharing of ancestral stories following the “First to Fight: The Polish War” talk by Roger Moorhouse, which saw relatives of Polish veterans sharing their family’s stories, but more importantly, feeling heard and valued, for the first time in many cases.

On numerous occasions local people have stated that they “had no idea...” in respect to the WWII history on their doorstep in Sherwood Forest, with a keen interest in filling the gaps in their knowledge and sharing their own families’ stories. This encouragement to discuss the War, local impact and familial legend builds an appreciation for the experiences of the older generation and cross-generational communication as well as invoking a connection with their locality and community. The tourism strand works to further encourage this understanding and pride in local WWII history, and for me is as much about individuals feeling confident and proud to share their county’s heritage with others as it is about driving the tourism economy.

3. Covid-19 impact

The presence of COVID-19 and the pandemic has had a significant impact on the way the project has been managed, delivered and received, in ways which were never envisaged when the project concept was designed and planned during spring and early summer 2019. However, a very positive outcome is that the project was started six months late in September 2020 and has responded extremely well to the vicissitudes of numerous lockdowns during 2020, 2021 and early 2022. The converse could well have been a full cancellation of the project.

In terms of context, all pre-thinking and planning was carried out before COVID-19 and then implementation post COVID-19. An example of how the project has had to adapt to a COVID-19 compliant context, was the original date for the interview of the Community Education and Engagement Officer (CEEEO) had to be rescheduled from being an in person interview on April 1st 2020 to a ZOOM format on July 1st 2020 with this being the first time either interviewers and interviewees had undergone such an approach. The CEEEO was then unable to take up her post until 1st September which meant that nearly six months of work, a good deal of which is weather dependent was unable to start.

Once in post, a key aspect of the community engagement was the direct face to face group and individual meetings planned as part of the gathering of World War II data and the sharing of experiences. This could not happen as had been planned, however with the use of new technology installed in August 2020, which was made possible by the NLHF Covid Emergency Fund, Sherwood Forest Trust staff, and in particular, the CEEEO were able to work remotely. It is clear that this IT innovation to Office 365 and the use of apps such as TEAMS and ZOOM has been critical to the progress of the project in ways that the Trust could never have imagined a year earlier. In terms of the developing skills, knowledge and expertise of the CEEEO it has meant that the project is likely to achieve greater outputs and outcomes than had at first been considered. The fact that the Trust was able to continue to deliver the project through the pandemic restrictions shows the strength of the team and in particular that of the CEEEO.

The remainder of the report will give more specific examples of how COVID-19 has influence the way the project has been delivered.

4. Progress towards project aims and approved purposes

Progress towards the project aims will be assessed at each stage of the project. In this report it will mainly concentrate on what the project team has been able to achieve within the restrictions of the pandemic and how these achievements have helped them to progress the aims and ambitions of the project. Progress towards project aims will vary at each stage of the project, as it will depend on which strands of the project are being worked on and therefore which aims are being progressed.

Project aims and the NLHF Approved Purposes

4.1 Approved Purposes

- High visibility acknowledgement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund on site, online and in all activities as well as using your project to acknowledge and thank National Lottery Players
- Openly recruit a Community Education and Engagement Officer to oversee day to day project delivery
- Commission a full external evaluation of the project

High visibility of the NLHF logo has been implemented across activities and is included on official email signatures as well as shown on the Trusts website. A Community Education and Engagement Officer was appointed in 2020 and started in post in September 2020.

The report has been compiled by Culture Syndicates, an independent consultancy commissioned for the sole purpose of evaluating the project in an objective and non-biased manner. The consultancy was assisted by Dr Patrick Candler, CEO and Susie Johns, Community, Education and Engagement Officer of The Sherwood Forest Trust.

4.2 Key Project aims

- To share the role of Sherwood in the Allied narrative of the Second World War
- To encourage greater discussion and the sharing of wartime experiences between people of different ages, abilities and cultures across the Sherwood community.
- To build new and sustainable partnerships and relationships with local communities and organisations who share our interests.
- To celebrate a 'Spirit of Wartime Sherwood' legacy element to keep the memories alive and ensure the research completed through the project is available for future use.

Approved Purposes

- Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of this project
- Partner with local residential homes and community centres to work with older people, enabling them to share stories through reminiscence sessions and intergenerational work with young people
- Devise activities and partnerships to engage more diverse audiences from Newark and Mansfield with the project, including Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish communities and people with refugee experience

These Key Aims and Approved Purposes are being implemented through the various themes and activities of the project. Using engagement activities such as the programme of talks, the archaeological work and developing partnerships, the project has managed to build relationships

with communities that have shared World War II experiences to connect them to the project. In the case of the talks programme that was originally intended to be delivered to live audiences across the Sherwood Forest area, the pandemic has had a positive outcome. Instead the talks were delivered online, which encouraged family groups to attend and attendees could take part without the worry of getting to venues that were difficult for them to get to or involved a long journey. Due to this the talks will continue online to retain maximum participation.

People and diverse communities are at the heart of the project and the intention is to work with refugees and Eastern European Communities, both long standing and those who are relatively new to the area. In September 2020 contact was made with the Nottingham Ukraine Association, British Italian Society, Jewish Gen Society and the Nottingham Refugee Forum. At this point there was no response from these groups as they were closed due to the pandemic. As the restrictions have lifted the opportunity has re-emerged to connect with the different community groups and this work is now on going. Partnerships are being developed with larger organisations such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Clumber Park, Nottingham University and The National Holocaust Museum. These partnerships are helping to build relationships with a range of audiences as well as being part of a long-term legacy to continue to keep memories alive and ensure the research completed through the project is available for future use.

The pandemic has also affected the ability of the team to work with local residential homes and community centres, to enable older people to share stories through reminiscence sessions and intergenerational work with young people. However, the team are now making new approaches to residential homes and community centres in the hope that with the end of national restrictions it will be possible to make progress in this area. This strand of work has now been combined with the Oral History and Research strand so that it can be offered as a joint training package to activity coordinators in residential homes ensuring the longevity of this area of work.

4.3 Project aim

- Survey and catalogue the physical World War Two remains so that they are better identified and explained
- To involve interested groups in this activity
- To involve the local diverse communities

Approved Purposes

- Carry out non-invasive archaeology work (including GIS and LIDAR) to identify, record and catalogue the physical remains of Sherwood Forest's Second World War presence and share this widely through community talks

During 2020 and 2021 the onsite community archaeology was not able to proceed as planned. Talks with the archaeology company, Merican, took place to re-schedule their programme of archaeology for the project. In agreement with NLHF the new programme will now continue until March 2023 and include two seasons of archaeological work. The first set of onsite work took place between October 2021 and March 2022 with the second onsite work due to start in October 2022. Activities have taken place to encourage participation from local communities and students from Nottingham University, which has resulted in this strand of the project making positive steps to deliver on the intended outcomes.

4.4 Key Project aim

- To facilitate a range of education and learning tools and opportunities for use by old and young alike, people of different ages, abilities and cultures across the Sherwood community and beyond.

Approved Purposes

- Work with Perlethorpe Field Study Centre to deliver Evacuation Days for 200 school children

Theme three of the project, 'Immersive Experience for Primary Schools,' links to this project aim and NLHF Approved Purpose. Work on this strand of the project began in September 2020 with the contacting of local primary schools, and research into including Home Education group sessions. School children have now taken part in 'Dig for Victory' and 'Evacuee Days' with positive feedback from teachers and children. Since children have returned to school after the national lockdowns there has been an increase in the number of families educating their children from home. The team has responded to this emerging group by promoting the 'Immersive Experience' sessions to Home Education groups within the area. These have been well received and this is now seen as an expanding audience group.

Originally this work was to be delivered in partnership with Notts Outdoors at the Perlethorpe Field Study Centre, however only the first activity was able to take place at this site. The following activities took place on another Notts Outdoors site at Brackenhurst Environmental Education Centre. Notts Outdoors provides learning opportunities for young people in Nottinghamshire and partnered with the Trust to deliver the activities providing a trained facilitator. The change in site worked in the Trust's favour as the new facilitator was an ex-military man with a personal interest in World War II.

4.5 Project aim

- Invite local history groups and International Cultural groups to participate in a research and oral history gathering exercise
- Project to culminate in an exhibition and series of talks.

Approved Purposes

- Deliver oral history training to 12 volunteers with East Midlands Oral History Association (EMOHA) and an associated oral history exhibition

There have been delays with this area of work due to the pandemic and the national lockdowns. This has affected the delivery of the oral history training and therefore work is only just starting. Recruitment of participants is under way and some online training has taken place in both oral history and research. This strand of the project has been widened to include genealogy and palaeography.

4.6 Recommendations

It is recommended that Sherwood Forest Trust:

- Continue to reach out to a wide range of communities
- Have a clear plan for developing new relationships
- Have a realistic approach to delivering the different strands of the project

Continue to reach out to a wide range of communities

Working with a wide range of communities and organisations has been a successful element of the project. It will be important to continue with these communities and partner organisations not only for the lifetime of the project but also beyond the project expiry date.

Have a clear plan for developing new relationships

As the project moves into the final stages it will be important to decide on a cut off point for developing new relationships to deliver the aims of the project. As partners have changed due to the pandemic the Community Education and Engagement Officer has approached new organisations and developed new relationships, but this takes time and as the NLHF project nears its end date developing relationships may not be realistic. New relationships that will help to deliver the project legacy are important, but emphasis will need to be on delivering the projects aims within the project timeframe.

Have a realistic approach to delivering the different strands of the project

The various strands of the project have all been affected by the pandemic. Some strands such as engagement with different communities and education have increased in size and impact, whilst others have been difficult to undertake. At this stage a realistic approach is needed and decisions around allocation of staff and volunteer time to the different strands needs to be thought through.

5. Heritage engagement activities and interpretation

5.1 Table of all activities

Date	Event/Activity	Audience
2020		
October	School Visit Evacuee Day	Schools
2021		
March	Dig for Victory Day	Schools
April	Virtual workshop delivered to 14 Home Education families	Children
	Talk delivered to 59 households	Adult
May	Home Education Evacuee Day	Children
	Home Education Dig for Victory	Children
	Talk delivered to 34 households and Polish Airmen Association	Adults
June	Land Army/Dig for Victory Day	Schools
	Land Army/Dig for Victory Day Pilot for Home Education Group	Children
	Talk Existing archaeology onsite & what the project would focus on	Adult
	Talk to Rotary Club on the project	Adult
July	Talk by daughter of POW	Adult
August	Survey day at Ransom Wood 5 participants	Adults
	Surveying at RSPB Edwinstowe 26 Participants	Families
	Talk 21 attendees	Adult
	Talk 54 attendees from Polish communities	Adult
November	5 Days at RSPB Edwinstowe 3 x public 2 x Home Education	Adult
	Talk 13 attendees	Adult
2021		
February	Talk 15 attendees including teachers Holocaust archaeology	Adult
	Field work public sessions	Adults
2022		
March	Palaeography Class 8 attendees (6 family historians & 2 museum volunteers) How to read historic handwriting then applied to WWII documents & letters to help people researching family or working with records from war era.	Adults
	Public archaeology sessions x 5	

5.2 Talks

A programme of informative talks started in April 2021. These talks are primarily aimed at adults and delivered by individuals with specialist subject knowledge. The talks were intended to enable the Trust to engage with local communities during the pandemic and were therefore designed to be delivered online. From April 2021 until March 2022 nine talks were delivered to fifty-five households and another eighty-two individuals. An unexpected outcome from the talks was that more people from family groups were able to attend and people were not excluded due to the location of the talk or not wanting to travel any distance at night. Because of these two factors talks are continuing to be delivered online to ensure continued maximum accessibility.

Talk subjects

- Bomber crews related to Newark
- Polish Airmen
- Military interventions that did not work
- Entertainment on the home front
- D-Day
- Archaeology of World War II in Sherwood Forest
- Newark Cemetery Polish War Graves
- Holocaust archaeology at Treblinka
- The Lumber Jills
- Rationing and food

People attending the talks were asked to complete an online survey so that the Community Education and Engagement Officer could monitor the quality of the talks and visitor experience. One hundred and thirty surveys were completed. Facebook and Eventbrite were by far the most popular methods of hearing about the talks. Forty-four people heard about the talk they attended through Facebook and thirty-seven heard through Eventbrite. The Women's Institute were the third most popular with eight people hearing about the talk through this organisation (see appendix 1 for complete list).

The main motivations for people attending the talks were connections to the subject matter, for example family or friends in the Polish community and an interest, educational or work connection to the various topics. Two individuals from outside the United Kingdom had heard about the talks and attended. One of them stated *'My grandpa was born and grew up in the Sherwood Forest area. I've also visited a few times. I'm a school librarian in the U.S. with students interested in World War II history.'*

The information gathered from the surveys showed most individuals considered their experience to be very good or good. In total 122 individuals or 94% scored either very good or good. The other 6% scored ok, poor or very poor. The reasons for the high scores were that the talks were informative, delivered by knowledgeable speakers and well presented. These subject areas were also what individuals liked best along with the speakers, engagement, research, visual resources and the question and answer section.

'Really interesting content, the posters, ration books and packages brought the talk to life. Speaker was engaging and clearly very knowledgeable about the subject.' Talk attendee

When attendees were asked if they would attend similar events online in the future 98.5% said they would.

5.3 Archaeology

An important part of the project is to survey and catalogue the physical World War II remains still visible in Sherwood Forest. The Trust set out to partner with a local archaeological 'Community Interest Company' and to invite interested groups to help, including the Friends of Thinghove and the National Narrow Gauge Railway Society, to ensure that remains are fully documented and better explained to the public and local communities. The Trust would, by using non-invasive archaeology work (including GIS and LIDAR), identify, record and catalogue the physical remains of Sherwood Forest's Second World War presence and share this widely through community talks.

The archaeology strand of the project was greatly affected by the pandemic. In year one (2020) of the project in-person information session had to be cancelled and recording days reassigned to interest groups rather than open to the general public. This approach was taken to keep numbers to a minimum and therefore reduce the risk of contagion for participants. Preparation work, an initial LIDAR survey and meetings with Mercian Archaeology all took place. However, Mercian Archaeology were furloughed in November 2020 and this meant that planned on-line engagement events could not take place.

In year two (2021) students from Nottingham University were recruited to carry out desk based research on Ramson Wood and Prisoner of War (POW) sites and one student was recruited to work on desk based research to compliment the archaeological groundwork. In June an online talk was delivered to thirty-five individuals to explain the existing archaeology and inform people of the intended outcomes and focus of the project. This led to post-talk discussions including information sharing from local participants and follow up emails and contact. In August, archaeology sessions were uploaded to Festival of Archaeology program and fully booked Home Education archaeology days took place.



Archaeology volunteer with a visitor

Contact was also made with Nottingham University to provide bursary places for the field school. The course for this was a five-day Landscape Archaeology course combining class-room lectures, practical workshops (using computer-based applications), field visits, and site tours of the landscape to give an immersive learning experience, introducing students to the wide and exciting field of landscape archaeology. The course used the landscape of Sherwood Forest as the main case study, with site visits to the Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve and other local historic landscape locations, and also included examples from around the UK and the wider world, to enable students to experience the subject first-hand and to begin seeing the landscape in a new way.

The archaeology student who undertook the course had completed a volunteer placement at the project during the pandemic, however had not

been able to attend the in-person activities due to lockdown restrictions. The student completed market research and designed some of the elements for the pop-up banners and the interactive map for the tourism strand. However due to the restrictions she had missed all field work opportunities, so the archaeology field school was able to provide field work experience.

The Community Education and Engagement Officer met with Mercian Archaeology to discuss revised plans for the archaeology. In September partnership activities were planned with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to deliver public archaeology days. Apart from the pandemic affecting engagement activities the winter weather prevented schools from taking part in some of the archaeological days. In early 2022 the final archaeological survey was completed and written up, three school visits took place and two community days held with fifty people attending.

Archaeology Participants

- Home Education families
- Students from Nottingham University and University of Leicester
- Armed Forces Veterans
- Historic England representative
- People with disabilities inc. mental health conditions
- Retirees
- Local people with existing archaeological interest
- Local people with no existing archaeology experience
- Local people interested in World War II
- Local people interested in local history/archaeology
- People from further afield with archaeological/topic specific interest
- Families



Archaeology with Home Education Families

5.4 Working with Refugees and Eastern European Communities

The Community Education and Engagement Officer, Susie Johns, has been working with organisations that will help to build relationships with different communities in the Sherwood Forest area. At the beginning of her contract Susie contacted the Ukraine Association, the British Italian Society, the Jewish Genealogy Society and the Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum. Due to the pandemic there was no response to this contact, however working with schools and Home Education groups enabled some work with these communities to take place within year one of the project. An arts project was developed to widen the engagement with these communities. An outline for the project was created with Brunts Academy which is part of Evolve Multi Academy Trust (EvolveMAT). However, a change in staff during lockdown led to the project being dropped so the Community Education and Engagement Officer adapted the proposal and has finally found a new partner for this work in the National Holocaust Centre and Museum. The arts project will now begin in Summer 2022 (see appendix 2 for the Arts Project Proposal).



POW camp mosaic shared by Edwinstowe Historical Society forming basis of art activities with further research from Kevan Pooler

5.5 Schools and Home Education

The main school activity for the project is to create an immersive experience for primary school children. Working with Brackenhurst Notts Outdoors the Community Education and Engagement Officer has developed activity sessions for school children to participate in. The two main sessions have been 'Dig for Victory' and 'Evacuee Day'. Take up for school sessions were initially low due to COVID-19, however a new audience has also materialised as the families who home educate grew through the pandemic and many families have decided to continue with home education. School and home education sessions were piloted, and feedback gathered from teachers and participants to ensure quality and relevance to the school curriculum.

During the pandemic an online workshop about the Royal Air Force was developed for Home Education families and mainstream educating families. This was delivered by a company, called Historic Workshops, who specialise in workshops for school age children. The workshop lasted for an hour and was attended by fourteen households including twelve households with more than one participant, with attendees appearing to be positively engaged and interested.



Education day with school children

Home Education Group

Statement by the Community Education and Engagement Officer

The Home Education (HE) group were contacted via Facebook through a private message to the administrator of the Nottinghamshire Home Education Families group. This is run to share opportunities, support and guidance for HE families by HE families and does not usually allow external agencies. The administrator allowed me to post an introduction to the project and the opportunities I was hoping to offer those in the Facebook group including experience days at Brackenhurst and archaeology – the education activities identified for Primary Schools in the original NLHF bid.

Home Education families often include children who do not thrive in mainstream education due to complex social and emotional needs, or neurologically diverse needs which are not met by traditional support packages offered by the education system. This could be because they are not considered severe enough to reach the threshold of funding provision or because their needs are not recognised as SEN in an educational psychology framework. This does not make traditional schooling any easier for the individual however and can make the flexibility of home education a more viable way to access learning. Within the families met by the Sherwood Forest Trust through this project, the majority have at least one child who have had difficulty accessing mainstream education through neuro diversity needs or emotional and social needs. These include autism, ADHD and anxiety.

The project has also attracted families who have English as their second language. One Eastern European family in particular who attended the Behind Enemy Lines survival skills day came with both parents and four boys. The Mum commented to me that “it is great to get to do something with Dad, we’re really bonding here”, as they were constructing their shelter. The family were a little shy at first with the other families present, but the nature of the activities meant that

language was not a barrier at all, and they worked together with others during the orienteering and fire building and were soon a team.

Home Education families often attend with a range of children of different ages and learn as a family. This inclusive learning style provides opportunities for sharing family stories about relative's experiences of the War and their memories, and I have witnessed three conversations where parents have discussed what "Grandma used to tell me" and where "Grandad fought" as a direct result of completing activities together at Brackenhurst and being prompted to recall information. It has also resulted in younger children being involved, albeit sometimes on the periphery of the activity, but certainly absorbing the gist of the environment of the farm for the land army day, the forest for the archaeology and the Anderson Shelter for the evacuee day.

The cross curricular nature of archaeology has resulted in lots of maths taking place without the children realising it. Teamwork is essential to measure and record the pits, and everyone has a job on rotation.

Learning Programme Activity

Date	Activity
2020	
September	➤ School visit – Evacuee day
November	➤ Secondary school contacted and invited to participate in targeted art project. Meeting held with Brunt Academy Trust
December	➤ Evolve Multi Academy Trust confirmed participation in arts project for Summer term 2022 (in April 2022 a new partner, The National Holocaust Centre and Museum was engaged).
2021	
February	➤ Working with students from Nottingham University to collate resources schools arts project
March	➤ Dig for Victory Day - Primary School Day at Brackenhurst
April	➤ Virtual workshop about the RAF delivered to 14 Home Education families in the Newark and Sherwood areas
May	➤ Home Education days at Brackenhurst. Evacuees, Dig for Victory and Land Army sessions. Attended by 26 individuals each day, with high proportion of neuro-diverse young people.
June	➤ Land Army and Dig for Victory day attended by Asquith School (high rate of PP and ESL students). ➤ New day developed for Home Ed group as a pilot, based on survival skills for soldiers parachuting into enemy territory. Attended by 22 children and 13 adults (8 with neurodiversity, 7 from ethnic minority communities or English as a Second Language).
July	➤ 50 children attended Land Army Day ➤ 3 School visits
August	➤ Home Education Archaeology Days x 2

Learning Programme School Case Studies

Brackenhurst World War II Dig for Victory Day - 12th May 2021

This session was attended by eight families who Home Educate their children, there were twenty-six participants in total. The event was promoted on the Nottinghamshire Home Education Facebook group, with families registering for tickets using Eventbrite. It was originally booked for December 2020 but was postponed due to Covid.

Some families knew each other, but most did not know anyone else in the group. The nature of the activities encouraged teamwork and interaction, and all participants were able to work with new people.

The group was diverse, with children from three to fifteen years of age, and seven with neuro-



diversities including ADHD, autism and severe anxiety. Parents remained with their children and were encouraged to participate alongside them while enabling the young people to work in teams without direct supervision where appropriate, adding to the learning experience.

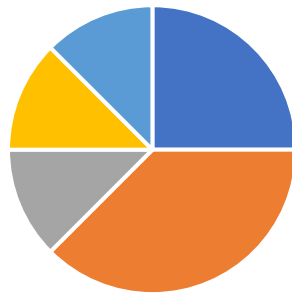
The facilitator was able to include all of the young people and worked with their individual needs to enable them to effectively participate and enjoy the day.

The itinerary was planned in conjunction with Simon from Notts Outdoors to incorporate a tour of the walled garden which was used as a kitchen garden during WWII, digging a vegetable plot, planting beans and constructing bean poles, making newspaper plant pots with a bean to take home, grinding corn, churning butter, making cheese, pressing apple juice and visiting the animals on the farm.

All **adults** were asked to complete a feedback survey:

- All eight of the adult participants answered “a lot” in response to the session being easy to organise, educational for all participants, appropriate in its tone and settings, and enjoyable for their family.
- All eight stated they would take part in a similar session and would recommend it to others.

What was the best part of the session? (Adults)



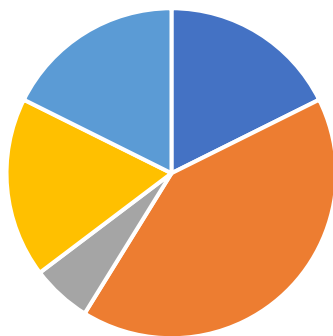
- All of it
- Apple Juice 1
- Hands-on activities
- Making food in old fashioned ways
- Map Reading/Orienteering

- One adult stated there could have been a more explicit talk about how food was affected in WWII. All others said they would not change anything.
- When asked if the session could be made more accessible, all agreed it was accessible as it was
- The invitation for further comments led to all adults thanking Simon and I for a “fantastic day”

The **children** were also asked to complete a feedback survey:

- When asked how much they enjoyed the day, sixteen said “a lot”, one said “a bit”. When asked how much they had learnt, three said “a bit”, fourteen said “a lot”.
- Additional comments included “I liked making and planting everything and bringing things back [home]”, “I learnt how people in the war would have made their own food because of rationing”

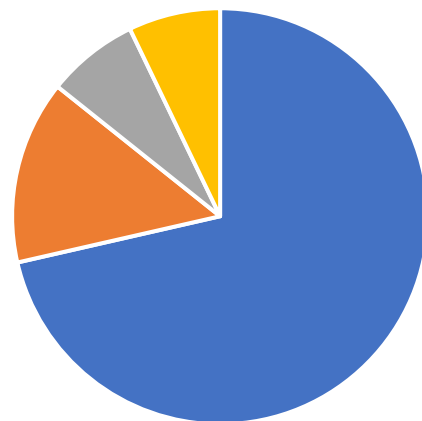
What was your favourite thing about the day?



- All of it
- Apple juice
- Making the food
- Cheese making

Perlethorpe Evacuation Day Feedback

What was your least favourite thing about the day?



- Nothing
- Butter making
- Cheese making
- Apple juice

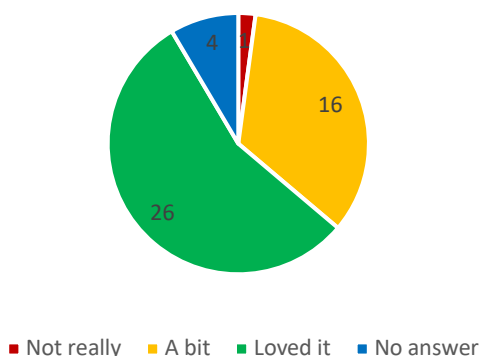
18th September 2020

Years 5/6,

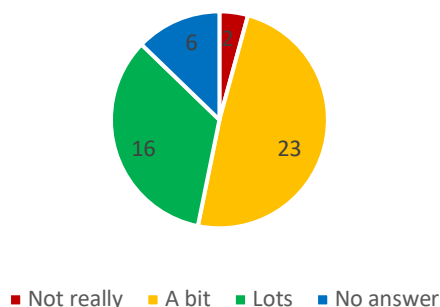
47 children + 5 staff

Children's Feedback

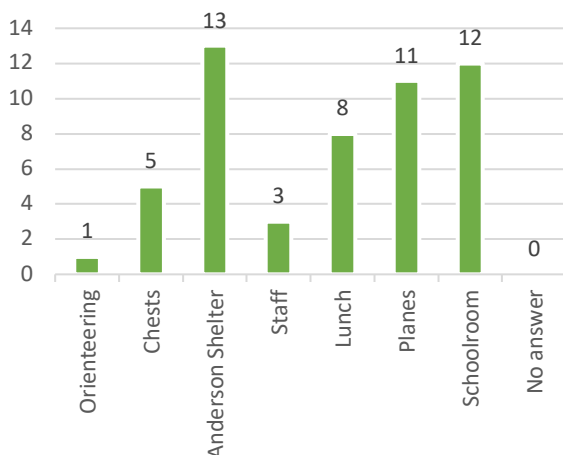
I enjoyed today's session



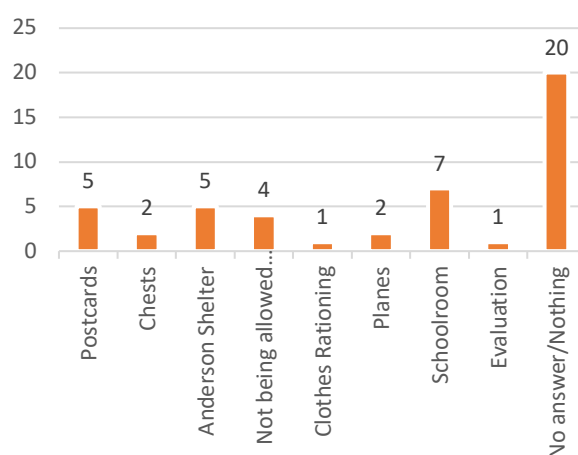
I learnt something new from today's session



My favourite thing about today's session was...



My least favourite thing about today's session was...



What did you learn?

"The names of different planes"

"I enjoyed the families and being put into them"

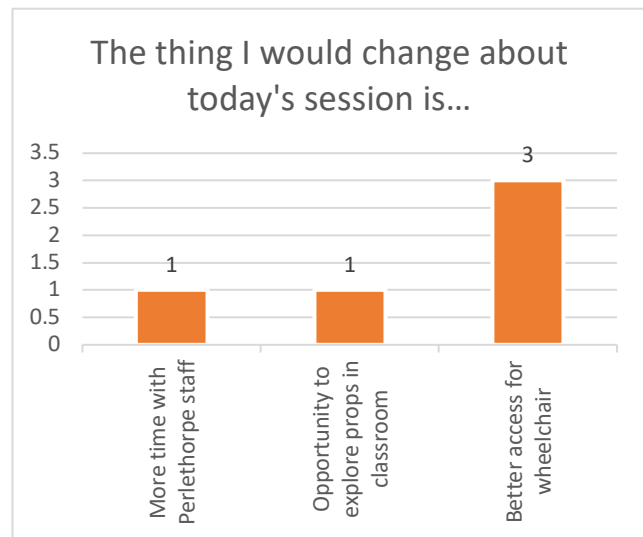
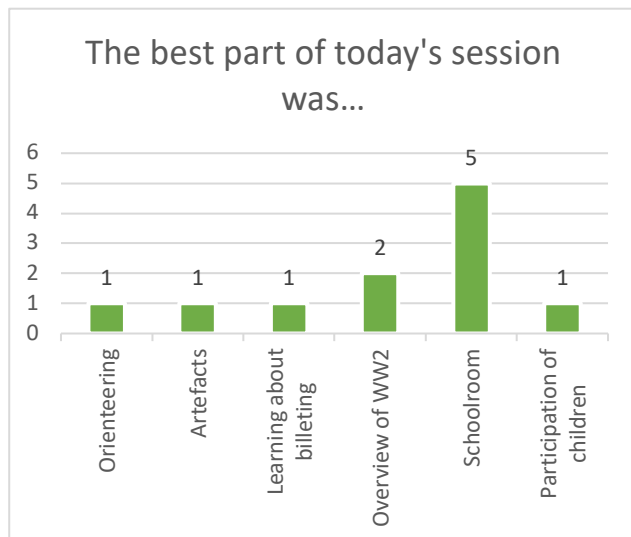
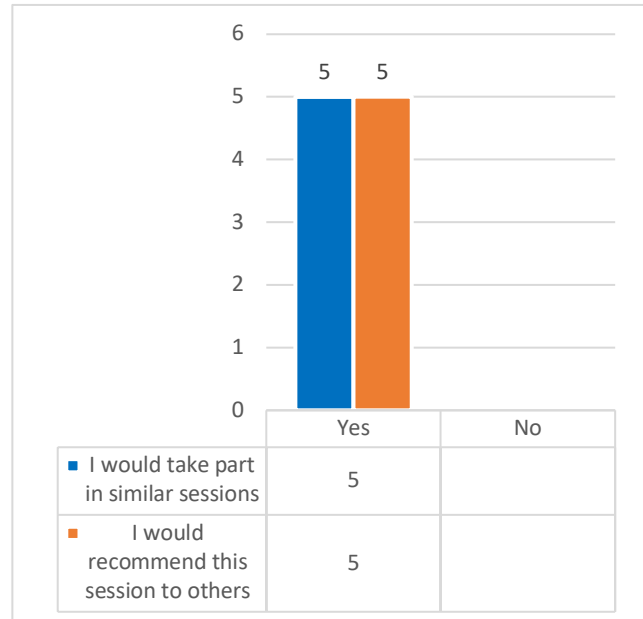
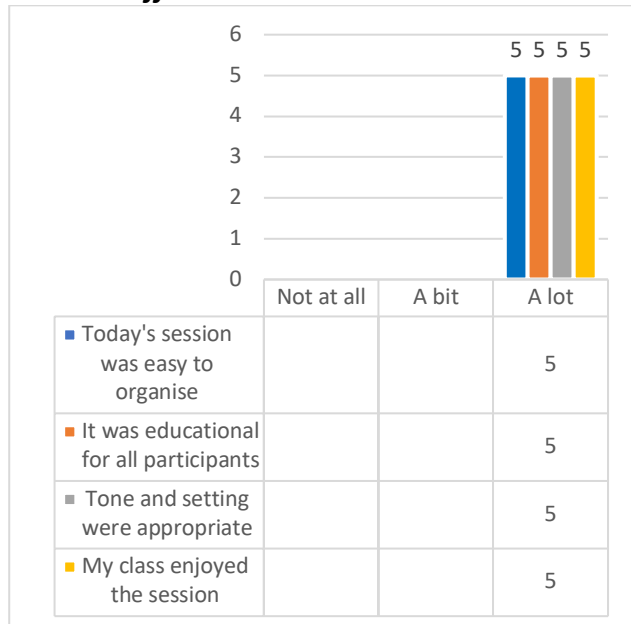
"What countries were allies and axis"

"What it was like for children in the classroom in wartime"

"The jobs the evacuated people did"

"They slept in the Anderson Shelter for forty days and the kids had to sleep with eight people"

School Staff Feedback



Teacher Comments

"A very pleasant day with a variety of activities that really engaged the children"

"All activities were relevant and expanded their knowledge about wartime Britain"

"The Perlethorpe staff involvement makes all the difference to their experience"

"Thoroughly enjoyable"

"The classroom setting was great to explain the war – visual, with the children up and about and involved"

5.6 Reminiscence

The reminiscence work been badly affected by the pandemic with care homes reluctant to engage with the project. To help deliver this work strand it has been combined with the oral history work (see section 6.7).

5.7 Research and Oral History

In September 2020 the first training session, delivered by East Midlands Oral History Association (EMOHA) took place for volunteers. However, this training stopped due to the pandemic. Contact was made with local history groups and EvolveMAT agreed to provide training in research skills for sixth form students hoping to study history at university. Online training in oral history was available so it was decided to start recruitment for participants and to widen this strand of the project to include genealogy and palaeography. However, EvolveMAT has had a change in staff which has impacted on the plans for the oral history training for the sixth form history students. The Community Education and Engagement Officer will now need to reconsider the training offer over the summer, and as the genealogy course finishes in July, whether to advertise an oral history course in the autumn recruiting from the local community and ready to practice alongside the archaeology season this coming Autumn/Winter.

The Oral History strand has also been combined with the reminiscence strand so that it can be offered as a training package to activity coordinators in residential homes in order for them to have the skills to properly hear and capture life stories. This is being planned for delivery in Summer/Autumn 2022 alongside the work Nikki Rafferty has been contracted to do with residents in care homes. This area of work will be part of the project legacy both in terms of trained activity coordinators and documented personal histories.

Palaeography course

This is a short course led by a university lecturer in how to read historic handwriting and then apply the techniques learnt to World War II documents and letters to help people researching family or working with records from the World War II era. It has been attended by six family historians, and two museum volunteers. One of the participants also works on an internship with the Imperial War Museum, a partner museum in Scotland, and has links with a colleague on the same intern program who is working for the Imperial War Museum and the National Holocaust Centre and Museum. This colleague is keen to work on the 'Spirit of Wartime Sherwood' project and his current work strand; 'digitising poetry written by Kindertransport survivors', links in well with the project refugee work taking place with the National Holocaust Centre and Museum. Other links to the refugee strand includes working with a POW camps researcher on anti-racism and inclusion and the Community Education and Engagement Officers has been asked if her WWII resource pack can be used as part of a diversity interventions session for secondary schools. These activities will be part of the arts project legacy.

5.8 Wartime Sherwood Trail

A wartime heritage trail that would involve partnership working with other heritage sites to ensure complementary local offers and would become part of the legacy of the project was devised. Due to the pandemic this was another strand that developed slowly; however, it is almost complete in the form of the tourism video and Munzee trail for which the Trust now have full permissions for. A Munzee trail is similar to Geocaching but it uses tiny sticker QR codes instead of a physical box (so is safer during COVID times) and a free app which can use to give the user information including a link to the site's website, historical information etc. It takes the form of a treasure hunt game.

5.9 Women at War

Women at war is the least applied strand of work at this time and the Community Education and Engagement Officer intends to target this strand towards the end of Summer and beyond. So far there has been some research activities with a volunteer about the Lumberjills* and a speaker was engaged to deliver the first talk. Contact has been made with the Forestry Commission who shared all their information about the Lumberjills and in turn the Community Education and Engagement Officer has shared this information with M2M (as with all the research), but so far there has not been any success with engaging with the WI or similar groups.

The Community Education and Engagement Officer will be attending the RSPB VE Day in May and Ollerton Jubilee Celebration in June with the intention to use those community events to introduce herself to local groups to start discussions about the project and how they could work together. Emails during lockdown have been rather impersonal and the Community Education and Engagement Officer has found that groups are generally reluctant to engage.



*Lumberjills - Women's Timber Corps, a branch of the Women's Land Army, that worked in Britain's forests during World War Two. As many as 15-18,000 young women left home for the first time, aged 17-24, to fell trees with an axe and saw for the war effort. Doing what was thought to be 'a man's job', these pioneering Lumberjills brought gender stereotypes crashing down.

5.10 Progress table for each activity using RAG ratings (Red, Amber, Green)

Activity	RAG Rating	Comments
Talks	GREEN	Created to enable engagement during the pandemic Very successful so will continue for the lifetime of the project
Archaeology	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic This strand of the project is progressing with good engagement when possible
Working with Refugees and Eastern European Communities	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic This strand of the project has involved lots of partnership work and is now progressing well
Schools and Home Education	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic Increasing number of schools now taking up the offer Home Education families have become a new audience
Reminiscence	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic Combined with the Research and Oral History strand to enable the work to be delivered
Research and Oral History	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic Work has now started on this strand
Wartime Sherwood Trail	GREEN	Delayed due to the pandemic Work almost complete
Women at war	AMBER	Delayed due to the pandemic Work has now started on this strand

5.11 Volunteer engagement

Before the NLHF project the Sherwood Forest Trust participated in the student/graduate intern and work experience programme at Nottingham University. This involvement has meant that the Trust already had the knowledge and skills to offer meaningful placement to students and other volunteers for the lifetime of the project.

Volunteer Log 1

Name	Ameena Vasheem	Sandia Gopaul	Rajdeep Nagra	Nieve O'Donnell	Richard Lord
Demographic	18-25 Student	18-25 Student	18-25 Student	18-25 Student	65-80 Teacher
Sourced from	Anna White	Anna White	Anna White	Anna White	Press release
Affiliation	Nottingham University	Nottingham University	Nottingham University	Nottingham University	Rotary Club
Length of placement	4 months	18 months	4 months	18 months	Lifetime of project
Tasks set	Produce primary source material for school art project re. refugees/DP	Templates for pop-up banners, leaflet, webpages and website. Practical archaeology surveying.	Collate existing archaeological research into a report suitable for a public lay audience	Practical archaeology surveying, event management for Sept. 2022	Research re. Lumberjills and Ransom Wood, leading rambling walks inc. WW2 sites
Hours volunteered	35	60	35	3	15

Volunteer Log 2

Name	Ben Haines	Helena Staszkiwicz	Lucy Farmer	Lydia Harris	Kate Girdlestone
Demography	25-35 Self-employed	45-55 Teacher	18-25 Student	18-25 Student	18-25 Student
Sourced from	Approached SFT	Polish war online talk	Suzanne McGregor	Suzanne McGregor	Jo Workman
Affiliation	N/A	N/A	Nottingham University	Nottingham University	Nottingham University
Length of placement	Lifetime of project	Lifetime of project	6 months	6 months	6 months
Tasks set	Creating promotional video & blog post re. archaeology, supporting archaeology participation	Sharing her family's story of settlement in Sherwood, being a subject for OH trainees, contributing to exhibition and blogs re. Polish experience	Supporting community archaeology activities, preparing learning resources for archaeology, writing blog posts	Supporting community archaeology activities, preparing learning resources for archaeology, writing blog posts	Writing Blog Posts
Hours volunteered	20	2	35	35	35

6. Partnerships

The Trust views working with partners as a core part of the project and a major legacy that will continue to deliver on the aims of Sherwood Forest Trust way beyond the lifetime of the NLHF funded project.

Partners

Organisation	Link Person(s)	Strand(s)
CWGC - Newark Cemetery	Meghan Keller	Tourism, Widening Audiences
Southwell Minster	Glenn Formoy, Helen Bates	Tourism, Widening Audiences
RSPB Sherwood	Carol Hallam	Tourism, Archaeology, Public Dissemination, Education
Nottingham University	Jo Workman	Education, Widening Audiences, Organisation
Clumber Park	Abi Whitlock	Widening Audiences, Tourism
Lancers Museum	Mick Holtby	Tourism, Public Dissemination, Education, Widening Audiences
Brackenhurst (Notts Outdoors)	Simon Williams	Education, Widening Audiences
Blidworth Rotary Club	Richard Lord	Public Dissemination, Education
National Holocaust Centre and Museum	Jill Robinson and Beccy Soulsby-McCreath	Education, Widening Audiences, Tourism
Newark Air Museum	Howard Heeley	Tourism, Education
Ransom Wood	Charles Cannon	Archaeology, Education, Public Dissemination, Widening Audiences
M2M Century of Change Education	Karen Merrifield	Education, Archaeology
M2M Veiled Landscape	Tori Bedingfield	Archaeology, Public Dissemination

6.1 Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) - Newark Cemetery

Meghan Keller from the CWGC has delivered an on-line talk focusing on the Polish community and war graves at Newark. She has also publicised talks to this community through their established mailing lists including the Trusts talk by Roger Moor about the Polish War. The Trust were able to participate in a tourism video with input from the central media team from CWGC and a place has been offered on a Royal Air Force course to a volunteer from the CWGC research team.

6.2 Southwell Minster

Participation in a tourism video focusing on their Katyn memorial and servicemen chapel. This together with the CWGC relationship demonstrates the sensitivity of project to help forge a relationship with the Holocaust centre.

6.3 RSPB Sherwood

This is a core relationship to the project as most of the archaeology is at the RSPB site. Carol Hallam from the RSPB is keen to work with the Trust and has invited them to have stalls at the Victory in Europe (VE) Day event on the 8th May 2022. This will give the Trust the opportunity to attend with

archaeology objects for handling by the public, information on the project, hands-on activities and to launch a tourism video. The tourism video focuses on the “hidden World War II stories hidden amongst the trees”.

6.4 Nottingham University

There is an agreement for three cohorts of undergraduate students per year to undertake a module of thirty-five hours assessed work experience with six students taking part in the project so far. This has led to the Community Engagement and Education Officer sitting on the curriculum steering panel for humanities and a one to one session with the faculty lead, to gain insight from the employer’s point of view to steer the university employability offer. A meeting in March took place to expand placements across the Sherwood Forest Trust team to grow the relationship beyond the World War II project.

6.5 Clumber Park

The Trust partnered with Clumber Park for Heritage Open Days to provide WWII themed activities and information for their volunteers to facilitate a “Dig for Victory” themed event. The Trust provided reusable plant pot making equipment and laminated information packs including project information branded with the Sherwood Forest Trust and NLHF logos. The event was shared via social media by Clumber Park, The Trust and central National Trust channels. It is also scheduled to participate with Clumber Park in a tourism video.

6.6 Lancers Museum

Participating in tourism video. One of the Nottingham University students involved in the project visited the Lancers Museum to interview Mick Holtby and gather information to enable her to write a project blog about the Lancers to share on-line and via social media. All blogs will be archived with the M2M website.

6.7 Brackenhurst (Notts Outdoors)

Simon Williams from Brackenhurst has facilitated all of the home education and school days at Brackenhurst. Together with the Community Engagement and Education Officer, Simon has helped designed and trial a new “Behind Enemy Lines” day based on Forest School skills applied to a true story of World War II soldiers finding their way through the French countryside to safety.

6.8 Blidworth Rotary Club

Richard Lord volunteers as a researcher for the project, but also uses his position within the Rotary Club to assist with contacting schools, sharing information and gathering contacts. The Community Engagement and Education Officer has spoken to the Rotary club about the project which has increased interest levels from the club.

6.9 National Holocaust Centre and Museum (NHCM)

This is a recent partnership following some staff changes and a wariness about the nature of the War depicted. After reassurance of the sensitivity with which the project dealt with the subject matter, the relationship is now being negotiated. They are participating in the tourism video. The Community Engagement and Education Officer is currently discussing a potential joint venture involving home education families working with an artist to explore POW, displaced person and refugee experiences in World War II. This will use the galleries and space at NHCM with archaeology and primary source material from Sherwood Forest Trust.

6.10 Newark Air Museum

Participating in the tourism video

6.11 Ransom Wood

Some of the archaeology activities have occurred at Ransom Wood including production of a video to promote public archaeology activities.

6.12 M2M Century of Change Education

The Community Engagement and Education Officer and Karen Merrifield are discussing how they can work together for this project to provide the research and activities to fulfil the World War II section of the Century of Change “Impact of War” requirement, rather than repeat work in the same catchment area.

Discussions also include the Community Engagement and Education Officer and Mercian (the Trust’s archaeology contractors) attending a schools’ event in July 2022 to provide activities at the RSPB site. This will be for 200 children and based on World War II activities as part of a wider offer by the RSPB. During the lifetime of the project the Trust has jointly carried out research with the RSPB and see this a part of the project legacy.

6.13 M2M Veiled Landscape

The Trust are working with Tori Bedingfield from M2M to provide Mercian with LiDAR data from M2M to use for the project. The Community Engagement and Education Officer sits on the working group for the M2M archaeology strand and is therefore up to date with the progress of the M2M project and how it can be useful to the research undertaken by the Trust.

Interim Report

September 2020 – April 2022

Jane Seaman

Cultural Syndicates

Appendix 1

Audience details from Talks

Attendees heard about the events from:

- Eventbrite x 37
- Email x 8
- Facebook x 44
- Twitter x 6
- Internet x 5
- Social Media x 2
- Sherwood Forest Trust x 4
- WI Group x 8
- CWGC x 2
- Family or friend x 4
- Word of mouth x 3
- Community Education and Engagement Officer x 2
- Website x 1
- Manchester and Lancaster Family History Society Forum x 1
- U3A x 1

Personal details of attendees

Age

85 Individuals did not answer the question

18-24 x 1

25-34 x 4

35-44 x 1

45-54 x 5

55-64 x 13

65+ x 13

Gender

86 Individuals did not answer the question

Male x 22

Female x 20

Self-describe x 2

Non-binary x 0

Ethnic origin

87 Individuals did not answer the question

Black x 1

Mixed ethnic group x 1

White British x 30

White Other x 6

Other x 5

Employment status

85 Individuals did not answer the question

Paid employment/self-employed x 13

Unemployed x 2
Stay at home parent x 1
Student x 2
Retired x 23
Other x 3

Disabled status
86 Individuals did not answer the question
Yes x 3
No x 41

Appendix 2

Arts Project Proposal – Displaced Persons, Prisoners of war and Refugees

Introduction

Oral history work has been carried out in the 1990s and early 2000s through other projects, some NHLF funded, with Prisoners of War (POWs) and Displaced Persons (DPs) who were placed in Sherwood Forest during and just after the Second World War. These testimonies consistently address themes including identity, their treatment by the native community, their treatment by their homeland community, their perception of the labels assigned to them, and their attitude towards practicing their religion and continuing their education.

These themes are universal in the experiences of refugees and displaced persons regardless of the chronological era or country they originate from. Many of these testimonies are publicly available online through individual historical society websites and wider project legacy sites.

Project Proposal

In the course of the Spirit of Wartime Sherwood project delivered by the Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT), additional anecdotes and memories have been collected, often by second or third generation family members recalling what their older relatives told them about the war time era. An archive of photographs of POW and DP camps, both contemporary to their use during and immediately after the War and over the period of time since then as they have changed their use or decayed, is available publicly online through a variety of websites. There is also an archaeological record of these sites through several projects using LiDAR, photogrammetry, photography and GIS available online.

Using these WW2 testimonies and primary sources including photographs and archaeology as a stimulus, an artist (performance or visual depending on consultation with the participant group) and/or a creative writing facilitator would work with the group to recognise and explore the universal themes and experiences contemporary refugee communities may share with the WW2 displaced persons. This work would produce a final exhibition product which could be shared at SFT events and wider events including Refugee Week which is held in Nottingham annually in June as part of a national celebration.

The project would engage a diverse group of Home-Schooled families with primary sources from WW2 and facilitate an expression of the experiences of modern and historic refugees through learning about the history of the area they reside in. The theme of reception by the native community is especially pertinent with tolerance a core attribute to be explored. Sharing the experiences of the WW2 displaced persons may positively impact the wider community as an example of tolerance and acceptance for those in similar circumstances.

Resourcing

The partner museum would be asked to provide a space for the group to meet and access to relevant source materials and expertise in addition to those provided by SFT. All artist costs would be met by SFT. Legacy materials would be available to both SFT and the partner museum.

Participants would be recruited by SFT using existing and new contacts.

Artist would be sourced in conjunction with SFT and partner museum with consideration to the participants, space and resources available and the logistics of time allocated to the project. This could be longer days over a shorter period, or for a shorter time but over a longer period for example.

The artist would be asked to provide materials within their quote.