

The Royal Parks in World War I



Evaluation and Summary Report

March 2020



The Project in Numbers

25,000

visitors walked through the trench and wildflower garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

33,000

people reached by WWI events

1,033 people engaged from

37 community group sessions

Over **2,400** training and learning places for **34** schools and organisations

5,000

people watched 10th Essex Living History Group take part in the Chestnut Sunday parade in Bushy Park

1 million

listeners for 2 interviews on Radio London

212

volunteer posts contributing over 8,500 hours

25 sessions for young people with special educational needs

2

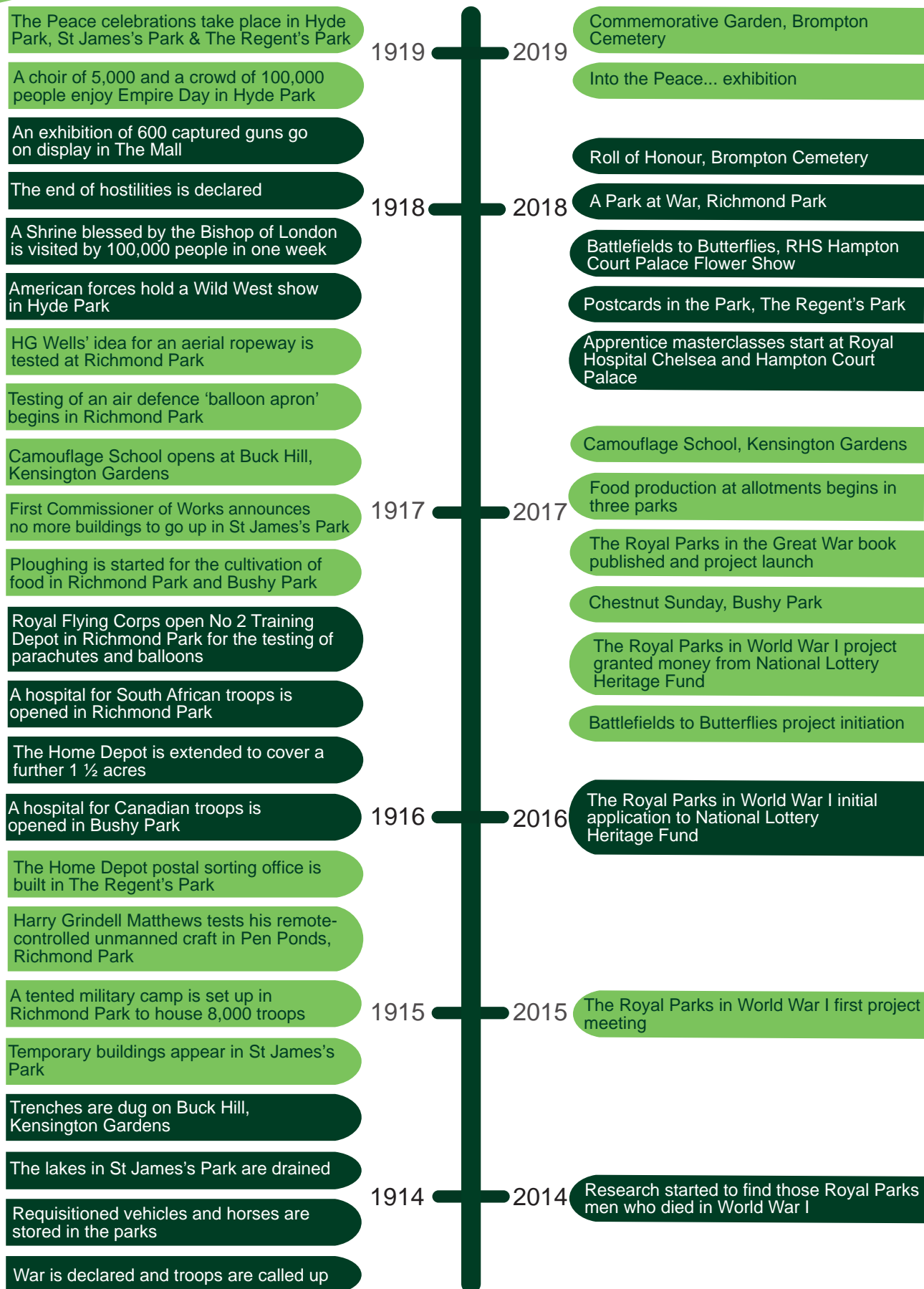
features on TV; BBC coverage of the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and ITV London reported on the unveiling of the memorial plaque at Brompton Cemetery

29

different organisations and groups helped in the presentation of the project

Commemoration Timeline

Some of the events that took place in the Royal Parks and the Royal Hospital Chelsea during World War I and how they have been commemorated 100 years later.



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Executive Summary

This project, promoted by The Royal Parks and The Royal Parks Guild with the support of the, then, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), has been delivered over the last three years (January 2017 to December 2019). It has been a reasonably complex project involving nine separate but related events. By using partners, volunteers and sponsors, as well as overlapping and integrating with other projects, it has provided benefits of public appreciation and opportunity.

The core of the project has been to recognise and publicise, in the 100th anniversary year of World War I, at least some of the many ways in which The Royal Parks helped this country during the war. In doing so we sought to discover and then commemorate the staff who went from the parks to serve, particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The project was designed to research and present these matters in accessible ways for the general public and for educational groups, in a variety of events and locations, predominantly within The Royal Parks.

The nine events involved displays, exhibitions, living history and participation activities as well as workshops, masterclasses and practical projects with school groups. Most of the events were outdoors and spread over several days to give opportunity for participation. Seven of the eight Royal Parks hosted events, together with Brompton Cemetery which is managed by The Royal Parks and has been the subject of separate, but parallel, grants from Parks for People BIG Lottery Fund and the

National Lottery Heritage Fund. Additionally, through beneficial links with the Royal Hospital Chelsea one of the main events, the concluding project exhibition, was hosted at the Hospital.

The project was greatly assisted by research and preparatory work which had been undertaken in the two and a half years leading up to the official commencement of the project in January 2017. Such activity was essential in helping to frame the brief, to draw in potential sponsors and partners, and to make an appropriate bid to the, then, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In practice, research had more than 'scratched the surface' but also needed considerable further effort, mostly by volunteers, during the delivery phase of the project; and indeed, some of the avenues remain live and continue as legacy.

The success of the events is measured in various quantitative ways within this report. We also draw attention to the qualitative responses which were received and recorded. They underline the overall success of the project in having reached and inspired diverse audiences, and in setting up legacies for others to follow and appreciate. It is acknowledged that one of the events, *Event 7: Dazzle Exhibition at Kensington Gardens*, could not take place due to external factors, but even here, and with the HLF Project Monitor's approval, it was possible to re-organise and weld elements of the intended exhibition into another event.



Overall the management team is pleased with the delivery of the project and the acknowledged public appreciation which is still being echoed after the active project has drawn to a close. This whole subject matter was a significant gap in knowledge, both public and official; so drawing together and giving expression through the events seems thoroughly honourable and important. Providing documentation and archive record will be a lasting legacy which can be accessed by people now and in the future.

It is also important to note three of the relatively unusual and beneficial overlaps which this project was able to achieve.

First, was that of linking up with the Royal Hospital Chelsea (RHC), initially for the purposes of a masterclass which brought together in-pensioners with apprentices in multi-generational working. In turn this made a connection between the RHC and Brompton Cemetery, thereby activating the possibility of a commemorative garden. This eventually gave us the welcome opportunity to work again with the RHC who hosted Event 9: *Project Exhibitioninto the Peace*.

Second, was the active link between this World War I project and the separate lottery-funded Brompton Cemetery Conservation Project. Although each continued under its original project aim and programme, there were several areas in which the two projects shared participation and raised public awareness.

Third, the *Battlefields to Butterflies* initiatives gave further momentum to remembering the men of the Royal Parks who died in World War I, by incorporating a wildflower

garden and memorial (stage 1 of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden "pop-up garden"* and Event 8: *Roll of Honour*) in its temporary setting at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018. *Battlefields to Butterflies* was not in itself part of the original 'purpose' of this project but was a parallel initiative by The Royal Parks Guild. The temporary creation of the World War I trench and recovering battlefield landscape at the flower show was a major achievement which brought many thousands of visitors who were able to witness and appreciate the contributions of The Royal Parks and their staff throughout World War I.

Overall the project, which was three years 'in the brewing' and more than two years of delivering the wide range of events, has achieved much in the way of research, participation, education and social interaction. The process continues also in legacy. The Royal Parks is committed to maintaining on-line legacy for a minimum of five years and there is further potential to place hard copy and on-line archive material in a potential heritage and history project for the longer term. Legacy lives on through some of the families who continue to research their ancestors and re-establish long-forgotten contacts. Of equal importance in both legacy and potential is the opening of doors between collaborating groups and agencies; particularly that between The Royal Parks, The Royal Parks Guild and the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Finally, the products of the project exhibitions are available and can be used in displays, outreach events and in conjunction with talks such as that presented at the Normansfield Theatre, Teddington in January 2020.



Introduction

Many people see the Royal Parks as iconic tourist destinations as well as having a unique place in London's history. Less well known was the role of the parks in World War I, of which there is very little physical evidence. There are several monuments to famous regiments and their sacrifices made during the war, but none to the men of the Royal Parks who fought and gave their lives.

To mark the 100th anniversary of World War I, The Royal Parks Guild (TRPG), a volunteer organisation independent of The Royal Parks (TRP) charity, approached the Chief Executive of TRP in 2014 with the suggestion that those employees who died should be identified and recognised in some way, and that the role the parks played in the war should be remembered. The proposal was well received and an equal partnership between TRP and TRPG was formed to consider how the Royal Parks in World War I could be commemorated.

TRP provided project guidance and administration while volunteers from TRPG began to carry out research. A story of sadness, hardship, determination and celebration was revealed. With a wealth of information, it was agreed that the stories from hundreds of hours of research should be told across as many parks as possible and played out in a variety of ways. To tell the range of stories effectively, nine events were developed to run between summer 2017 and winter 2019. This report describes how the project was able to uncover a hidden history of the parks and commemorate those employees who died during World War I.



The Project

In January 2017 the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), announced that a grant was confirmed to implement a series of nine events to be held in the Royal Parks. This was supplemented by additional funding from TRP and the Richmond Park Charitable Trust. The events carried out were:

- Event 1: Buck Hill in the First World War (Kensington Gardens)
- Event 2: Commemorative World War I garden (Hampton Court Palace* and Brompton Cemetery)
- Event 3: A park in wartime (Richmond Park)
- Event 4: Bushy Park in the First World War (Bushy Park)
- Event 5: World War I food production and demonstration allotments (Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park, Greenwich Park and Richmond Park)
- Event 6: Postcards from the park's past (The Regent's Park)
- Event 7: What did you do in the war? (Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, St James's Park, The Regent's Park and Brompton Cemetery)
- Event 8: The Royal Parks Roll of Honour (Brompton Cemetery)
- Event 9: Project exhibition...into the Peace (Royal Hospital Chelsea)

*Running parallel and adding value to this NLHF project was another series of events, devised and managed by TRPG and its partners, called *Battlefields to Butterflies*. This was developed to pay a horticultural tribute to all parks, gardens and grounds staff, from across the UK and its allies, lost in World War I by working with parks and estates which, at that time, formed part of, or were managed by, TRP. Currently these parks are now managed by a variety of organisations including TRP, Historic Royal Palaces and Historic England. Stage 1 of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden the "pop-up garden"* and Event 8: *Roll of Honour* were incorporated into the *Battlefields to Butterflies* exhibit at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018 to display the wildflower garden and memorial plaque, in partnership with Historic Royal Palaces.

Project Partners

The project is a joint venture between TRP and TRPG; TRP is the main grant holder with TRPG the main researcher and source of volunteer support. Both groups shared the role of leading the management board which was responsible for delivery. Two other partners formed part of the management board; the 10th Essex Living History Group, and The London Parks and Gardens Trust. Other groups and organisations took part as the project developed.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

To gain a greater understanding of the role and involvement of the Royal Parks and the parts played by those working in them during World War I, and to share this with the public in a range of accessible events.

Objectives

- Research the military and civilian activity that took place within each of the Royal Parks.
- Host a series of events with interpretation material, practical demonstrations and re-enactments.
- Reach out to a diverse and broad range of people from all ages and cultural backgrounds.
- The culmination of these events will be an exhibition to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the peace treaty at the end of World War I.
- Develop the engagement with the community and young people, through schools, to 'bring alive' the heritage of the parks during World War I.
- A legacy will be created by way of a memorial plaque and a display of interpretation boards at different locations in the parks.
- There will be a digital legacy for the project on The Royal Parks' website for a minimum of five years after the completion of the project.



The Events

What we wanted to happen

Variety of events

A series of nine events was set out in our Project Plan to reflect the variety of uses which were imposed upon each park during the war. At the end of these events we were to hold an exhibition highlighting the activities that had taken place and erect a memorial plaque to those TRP employees who died in the war.

Volunteer involvement

TRPG, being a voluntary-run organisation, has access to many people who were willing to help on the project. Their membership has a wide age range from students to elderly people and a skill set covering the needs of the project. TRP had their own volunteer register, as did our partners, from which we would search for appropriate people to support any aspect of the project. A total of 1,966 volunteer hours was calculated to be the requirement for the project.

Research

Initial research for the development of this project was carried out by members of TRPG. Using paper records such as those held at local history centres, the British Library and The National Archives, and digitally on Ancestry.com, British Newspaper Archive and the world wide web, it was apparent that there was a lot of information that had been set aside or forgotten over time. With this knowledge we intended to research in detail the activities of each park during wartime. Most importantly we aimed to compile a list of those employees of The Royal Parks who died during the war in order to remember them and research their life stories.

Public awareness

This project wanted to attract as wide an audience as possible through visitor attractions to reveal how the Royal Parks were used during World War I. The project recognises that in places where heritage has been investigated and promoted, it provides a way of helping people understand where they come from, their family and their community connections. The project aimed to attract 1,360 visitors to our events.

Community and school engagement

The Royal Parks have a major role to play in the life of many local communities, for social activity, wellbeing and biodiversity. In our Project Plan we aimed to engage a variety of local communities and schools. The intention was to reach out to a diverse and broad range of people from all communities to create activities and opportunities which were engaging and encouraged more learning.

Working in partnership

Partners were chosen for their expertise in certain areas of event delivery, for example school experience, living history, training facilities and research capabilities. At submission there were five partners assigned to the project.

Legacy

Any relevant information gained from our experience of the project was to be collected to form part of a digital legacy hosted on TRP's website, thus enabling future historians, students or members of the public to study this historic period of the Royal Parks.



What actually happened

Variety of events

The series of nine events was carried out during the period of the project in seven of the eight Royal Parks and additionally at Brompton Cemetery, Hampton Court Palace and the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The events provided living history in wartime settings in Kensington Gardens, a theatre production based on women's fight for equality at a postal sorting office, a memorial garden at Brompton Cemetery and experiences for schools (including young people with special educational needs) and community groups in allotments situated in four parks. These encouraged teamwork between partners, training for all ages, opportunities for research and increasing people's knowledge for all who visited the events. In remembrance of those men of the Royal Parks who died a wildflower garden was planted and a plaque was commissioned, engraved by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and erected as a memorial to them in Brompton Cemetery. At the end of the events an exhibition was held that brought together all the research and displayed our project work.

Volunteer involvement

The Royal Parks Guild provided most of the volunteer workforce. This was augmented by volunteers drawn from The Royal Park's volunteer database, partner organisations and London volunteer web-based portals. As some volunteers worked on several different events over two and a half years, we have highlighted the number of 'volunteer positions', rather than the number of individuals that would not fairly reflect the scale of the project. In all, over 200 volunteer positions logged over 8,500 hours across the delivery phase, taking part in a variety of roles ranging from historical research, construction, event stewarding, administration and teaching.

Being a jointly-run project, TRPG held voluntary positions on the project management board, and played a major role in producing and managing the events. Approximately 900 hours have been spent by TRPG board members on this role during the lifetime of the project. The board also consisted of voluntary representatives from the 10th Essex Living History Group, and The London Parks and Gardens Trust.

School, community and group engagement

We hosted:

- 37 community group sessions and provided over 1,003 person/sessions for young, elderly and ethnic groups
- 75 student/learning sessions for nine horticultural organisations
- 27 schools attended our events taking part in 34 sessions, lasting approximately an hour, which meant 1,796 pupil/learning sessions were given
- 15 young people with special educational needs attended 25 sessions at the Holly Lodge Centre, Richmond Park

The communities and groups hosted include:

Chelsea Pensioners
Roots & Shoots
Resonate Arts
Capital Arts
Metropolitan Police
The Royal Parks staff & contractors
The Royal Parks Guild members

Talks about the Royal Parks in WWI were given to the following groups:

Twickenham Local History Society
Rotary Club, Twickenham x 2
Kettner Lunch Club, Liberal Club, London
Hounslow Local History Society
Holly Lodge Centre, Richmond Park
Star and Garter Home, Surbiton
Probus Club, Isleworth
Probus Club, Epping
Richmond Borough History Seminar, Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park
Friends of Bushy and Home Parks x 2
The Treasury, Westminster

Research

To provide the information required to produce the events, a great deal of research was carried out by individuals and members of six history and heritage groups. Over 2,500 hours of research was undertaken by our volunteers utilising at least eight repositories of historical material.

The outcome of the research was collated to produce material that could be used to inform the public and provide a legacy. Our major research work was the publication of a book called *The Royal Parks in the Great War - revealing their part in the conflict*, published by TRPG. Other research was carried out to provide information for interpretation boards, leaflets, booklets, articles and blogs throughout the project.

Member groups taking part in research included:

TRPG
London Parks and Gardens Trust
The Postal Museum
Greenwich Park History Group
Teddington Society History Group

Repositories of historical material used:

The National Archives
British Library
Imperial War Museums
British Newspaper Archive
Ancestry.com
Hearsum Collection
Local Studies Centres
The Postal Museum

Public awareness

Our events were seen by just over 33,000 people. The majority visited the *Battlefields to Butterflies* exhibit, our associated project which contained Stage 1 of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden*, at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018. It is estimated that 25,000 visitors experienced walking through the trench and wildflower garden to view the memorial plaque. The next largest number was Event 4: Bushy Park in the First World War where an estimated crowd of 5,000 people watched the 10th Essex Living History Group take part in the Chestnut Sunday parade, of which 350 visited the marquee later to view information boards and talk to the group. A further 3,500 visitors attended the remaining seven events. However, due to the park allotments being freely open to the public, visitor numbers were only counted on school and group visits.

To increase public awareness on a regional scale we took part in two 15-minute interviews on Radio London. For Event 1: *Buck Hill in the First World War*, in September 2017, our project joint lead and a descendant of one of TRP's employees killed in World War I were interviewed by Robert Elms, and for Event 6: *Postcards from the park's past* our project joint lead was interviewed, in April 2018, by Jo Goode. Radio London had weekly audience figures of 621,000 and 454,000 listeners respectively aged 15+ for those periods. An interview with a descendant was also aired on BBC Radio Surrey and reported on LBC's news bulletin to publicise Event 8: *Roll of Honour* held at Brompton Cemetery on 8 November 2018.

Two events were broadcast on television; the BBC's national coverage of the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018 featuring the *Battlefields to Butterflies* exhibit, which included our pop-up garden and memorial plaque as part of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden*, was watched by over 1 million people; and ITV London in November 2018, for the unveiling of the memorial plaque by the Chairman of The Royal Parks charity, Loyd Grossman, at Brompton Cemetery as part of Event 8: *Roll of Honour*, had viewing figures of 842,000. Reports were also filed for the same event on ITV London News and Granada Reports.

Use was made of social media to publicise some of our events. For example, 14,000 people saw information about the trench tours (Event 1: *Buck Hill in the First World War*) on Twitter, 2,500 on Facebook and 272 people watched the introductory video produced by our project officer on Instagram. YouTube was also used to provide a visual record of events. A video was produced by David Domoney, ITV's celebrity gardener, for the *Battlefields to Butterflies* exhibit combining Stage 1 of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden*, telling the story of how war-torn ground can regenerate into wildflower havens and how this theme was used to honour those parks' employees who died in World War I. During Event 8: *Roll of Honour* event held at Brompton Cemetery two videos were produced and uploaded onto YouTube.

TRP set up a World War I section to their main website in 2017. As the project developed a variety of blogs, reports and papers relating to information gained from the project were uploaded to inform the public about people and events. A review of the analytic information showed that there were almost 3,000 page hits during 2019.

Many of our events were reported in newspapers, magazines and online increasing the amount of public awareness. We know that our events were published in three national newspapers, five local newspapers and 17 online media sites.

Print

The Times
Evening Standard
Mail on Sunday
Richmond and Twickenham Times
Your Local Guardian
The Resident, Chelsea
Camden News Journal
The Glasgow Herald
Royal Horticultural Society
Uxbridge & West Drayton Gazette
Family Tree
Britain at War magazine
The English Garden

Online

Mail Online
Telegraph online
Horticulture Week Online
PA Newswire
Pro Landscaper Magazine Online
AllinLondon
GetWestLondon
This is London
The Royal Parks
The Royal Parks Guild
Historic Royal Palaces

Working in partnership

We attracted more partners as the project developed and thus opportunities arose to choose better venues that would enhance visitor experience. In all we worked with 29 different organisations and groups in the presentation of this project.



What didn't work so well

There were occasions when commitments in the Project Plan had to be modified. In these cases, the project team responded by adapting other elements in the event to enhance the benefit to heritage and engagement.

Within the first year of the project there were major changes in the organisation of TRP. The project joint lead (TRP) who wrote the Project Plan was released, therefore creating a void in our knowledge base; just after the first year our project officer left, which meant TRP had to recruit a temporary replacement to continue with our programme, and after three months a new full time recruit was employed combining the project officer post with the NLHF and BIG Lottery Fund's project at Brompton Cemetery. These upheavals at key stages in our programme, together with moving offices, meant that guidance by senior management was interrupted, records were mislaid, and some administrative elements of events became more challenging.

Compared to the Project Plan we under achieved in some areas:

- By cancelling Event 7: *Dazzle Exhibition, Sackler Gallery*

However, discussions with the NLHF concluded with the agreement that the *Dazzle Exhibition* be replaced with a series of outdoor exhibitions in the parks called *What did you do in the war?* which was successfully delivered.

- By engaging only half the number of SEN pupils and vulnerable young people
- By hosting seven fewer groups at our events

These low figures were due to the difficulty in identifying or attracting local organisations to a World War I event together with changes in the project officer post making it difficult to retain local knowledge. The lower number of groups was balanced by the overall increase in the number of group members attending the events.

- By being unable to train 12 volunteers to carry out interviews for oral history (Event 5: *WWI Food production and demonstration allotments*).

Due to staff changes, the momentum for collecting oral history for this event was lost. It was therefore included in Event 8: *Roll of Honour* where we increased the number of interviewing volunteers taking part in oral history from two to five.



Evaluation

Due to the challenges in personnel and office changes the evidence available to inform analysis of feedback is limited. Where evidence exists, it provides qualitative and quantitative answers, including comments obtained from visitors and other analytical information. The data collected were mainly from small numbers of people or groups, but they do give an indication of the value of each event.

Methods used

Evaluation material was gained from various sources:

- Online surveys
- Feedback forms
- Comments (in dedication books, correspondence and feedback forms)
- Social media analytics data
- Photographic evidence

Summary of main findings

By evaluating both feedback and comments received, the project is judged to be a great success in broadening the knowledge of many people about the role of the Royal Parks in World War I. The interaction between the visitors and the living history group, the drama group and/or the volunteers brought so many aspects of the parks' heritage to life. Many of the visitors agreed that they had learnt more about World War I, and in their comments had written about their own family history, emotions and mourning.

Compared to the Project Plan we achieved:

- A 434% increase in the number of hours worked by the volunteers
- A 173% increase in the number of volunteer posts available in the project
- A 189% increase in the number of pupil/sessions
- A 188% increase in the number of student/sessions
- A 983% increase in the number of people from groups attending the events
- A 2,438% increase of on the number of visitors in contact with the events
- A 1,288% increase in the financial figure calculated for volunteer time (from £15,385 to £198,257)

For schools it gave a 'hands on' experience for the pupils whether it was vegetable growing, experiencing a postal sorting office or going through a trench. The teachers commented that Event 1: *Buck Hill in the First World War* was greatly enjoyed by children in their introduction to World War I and the trench experience.

Bringing the descendants of those Royal Parks employees who died in World War I together for three of the events, Stage 1 of Event 2, Event 8 and Event 9 enabled them to remember and honour their relatives, and to talk about their ancestors' lives. Group activities proved to be very popular, especially the sorting of mail in the pop-up sorting office. This type of social activity led to personal enjoyment and positive team working.

"Fantastic, authentic experience - much more realistic than being in a classroom."

"I though each activity was well resourced and managed by knowledgeable guides. The children loved it."

"The visit to Kensington Gardens allowed children to develop a first-hand knowledge of trench warfare which has had a significant impact on learned knowledge used in the classroom writing lessons."

"The Postal Museum was delighted to take part in Postcards from The Park's Past. ... Building a pop-up home depot, and immersing schools and visitors to the park in this war time story with original objects and actor performances was enormously rewarding."



Volunteers

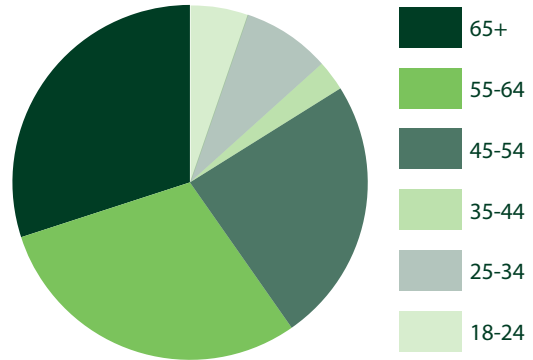
At the end of the project a sample of those volunteers who took part was sent an online survey form to fill out. The majority confirmed that they had learnt more skills by taking part and that they would be likely to go on to volunteer on other projects. As a result of working on the project, volunteers agreed their knowledge of the Royal Parks in World War I increased.

Recollections of a Volunteer

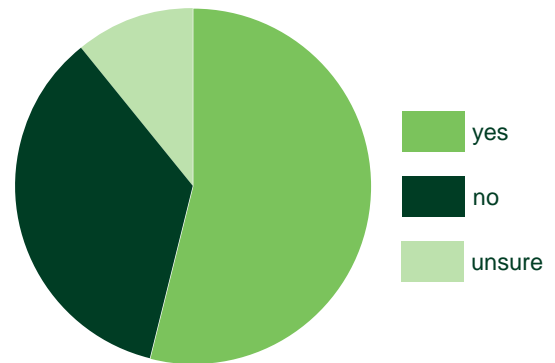
“It was a true privilege to volunteer for the “World War I in the Royal Parks” project for two years, from 2017 to 2019. As a volunteer, I was initially invited to research and write a series of short articles about different aspects of the World War I experience in the Royal Parks. Although I already had some knowledge about this period, having long been a fan of the Royal Parks, I learned much more through research in document and photo archives, contemporary newspapers, and even an oral history interview with a centenarian who still remembered attending the 1919 Peace Day celebrations at the age of five!

By the end of the project, I’d written about a dozen articles about wartime events in The Regent’s Park, St James’s Park, Hyde Park, and Richmond Park. Some of these articles were posted on the Royal Parks website; others were used as a basis for creating exhibition boards for public events held in those parks and later at the Chelsea Hospital. Probably my favourite articles were those that involved documenting the wartime experiences of women in the Royal Parks, as I think these are lesser-known stories that deserve greater public recognition. I really enjoyed doing this work, some on my own, but also collaborating with other volunteers and TRP staff and chatting with members of the public during the events.

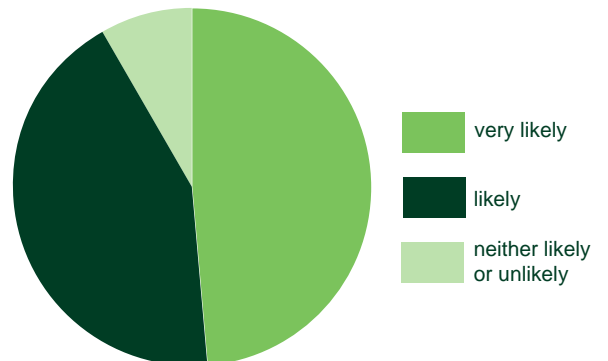
The final event I worked on was the commemorative exhibition in Speaker’s Corner in Hyde Park on Peace Day, July 1919. That was bittersweet - both my time living in the UK and the World War I project itself were wrapping up, while the rainy weather evoked the storms on the original Peace Day in 1919. Certainly, working with the Royal Parks on the World War I project will be one of my fondest memories, and I’d happily volunteer again if/when I return to the UK.”



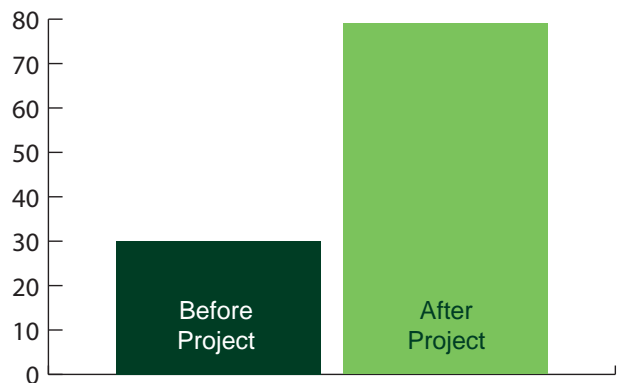
Age bracket of volunteers



As a result of volunteering with the project would you say you have obtained new skills?



Would you take part in a similar project again?



Percentage of volunteers with knowledge of the role of the Royal Parks in WWI

What didn't work so well

We experienced some difficulties with administrative matters which affected engaging with local communities as well as the collection and analysis of feedback material.

Organisation

Largely due to organisational and personnel changes, some records were dispersed, and time had to be spent trying to retrieve them. Login details were not passed on which meant the loss of some material from online surveys. This has led to a reduction in the amount of material available for evaluation. However, by studying other records it was possible to extrapolate some information.

Feedback at events

As our events were one-off there were no baseline data available to make any comparisons. We did hand out feedback forms at our first event, but the numbers involved in each group were so small that it was difficult to draw much in the way of conclusions from the results. We therefore chose to rely on comments left by visitors. In retrospect some form of quantitative feedback could have been carried out at our larger events in order to show how they contributed to the understanding of heritage and value to visitors. This shortfall in quantitative feedback did not detract from the number of positive and emotive comments received from visitors at other events.

We also noticed that in some cases visitors, while visibly enjoying and engaging with the events, were reluctant to take time to respond to feedback forms.

Lessons learnt

We did carry out 'learning through evaluation' on three of our largest events (Event 1: *Buck Hill in the First World War*, Event 6: *Postcards from the park's past* and Event 9: *Project exhibition ...into the Peace*). The results identified that if a project of this size and type was proposed again then discussions needed to be held with schools at a much earlier stage in the planning. This would address the issues of low adult/child ratios on visits, linking with subjects taught at school, clashing with school programmes and not being part of a longer-term school programme. To reduce the impact of these challenges, we worked closely with our partners to make them aware of the commitments for delivering services, which did contribute to our successful achievement of the project's aim and objectives.

We also sought a very wide audience; school children, the elderly, BAME groups and the general public. This proved difficult to achieve as some groups were not interested in taking part. For example, we didn't attract the number of BAME groups, as specified in the Project Plan, although we did contact several of them. Where we did build relationships with community organisations, the visits were really rewarding for staff, volunteers and visitors.

What we would do differently the next time

Were a project of this type be initiated again several points would need to be addressed early in the planning stage, namely:

- Commit partners to an agreed outline plan prior to submission
- Research groups in local communities to determine their interest in such a project
- Talk to schools about their lesson programme and availability before setting dates for events
- Be rigorous in the need, practicality and appropriateness of some elements being included in events
- Assess at the planning stage which events would be selected for gathering the most appropriate and relevant feedback
- Confirm procedures for record keeping and ensure adequate handover of information



Outcomes

Outcomes for heritage

From research undertaken by volunteers, we were able to piece together an overall picture of the role of the Royal Parks during World War I, and the contribution that employees made at the time. Such information had not been assembled and displayed in detail previously. The recording of our findings and the wide distribution of that knowledge, using various means, including electronic and printed media, will provide a longer, lasting legacy.

Outcomes for the public

We estimate over 30,000 visitors were in contact with information about the Royal Parks and World War I through involvement with this project. Both written and verbal comments from visitors showed how the events affected people in many ways. These are some of the words used to describe their feelings following events; “emotional”, “inspiring”, “fun”, “authentic”, “moving” and “memorable”. This links to building on their knowledge for the longer term by using terms such as; “understanding the role of the parks”, “increasing their knowledge”, “we shall never forget the sacrifice” and it gave a “comprehensive oversight of the parks”.

For the eight families of those employees of the parks who died in World War I, and were identified as part of our research, it brought new information about their family histories. Although many knew about their ancestors, they were delighted to have been given these aspects of their respective life stories and war record. One family member was so inspired with the research that has been carried out that she is now considering publishing her ancestor’s letters written from the Front. It also brought together family members through a common cause. One family was particularly pleased with Event 8: *Roll of Honour*; “it was very special and particularly as it brought so many grandchildren and great grandchildren together.”

Volunteers working on the events have acquired new skills such as research, event management, allotment husbandry, display design, public speaking and oral history interviewing. These are skills that can be utilised in a variety of future projects and it was heartening to see that many said they would like to volunteer on other projects in the future.

Outcomes for communities

The project was able to increase substantially the number of planned visitors from local communities, schools and students from that set out in the Project Plan. Apart from talks and printed information, each group was involved in practical situations that gained their attention, provided enjoyment and made a lasting memory.

School pupils from Years 4/5 were taught a wide range of subjects linked to the curriculum including; history, geography, mathematics, art and design, literacy and biology. They benefited from the experience of ‘hands on’ touching of artefacts, role playing stories and full event involvement. One group of eight young people aged 16 to 19 who have complex learning difficulties were regularly engaged over two years in learning gardening skills. Due to the pupils’ complex disabilities, their level of cognition can make understanding the concept of history quite difficult; so a sensory session was developed to help bring history to life. Sight, sound, taste, touch and smell were used to help them explore World War I. Horticultural apprentices and trainees from a wide range of employers were able to supplement their regular training with high-quality practical exercises and relevant seminars.

The project created activities that were engaging and encouraging. By bringing together such a diverse number of visitors into a group-working environment it allowed the development of friendships, new ideas and better contacts within sections of the community.

Longer term outcomes

During this project we re-discovered the original World War I memorial dedicated to the 102 men employed by His Majesty’s Office of Works, of which The Royal Parks formed a part. The government department at Great George Street, London, in which the memorial resides, was unaware of the significance of the tablet as it bore only the names of men who died. Following our introduction to them and handing over our research on the memorial, the Treasury now invite TRP and TRPG to their regular Armistice Day service of commemoration held in that building.

Opportunities for longer term learning have been established. Several session plans, based on the schools’ curriculum, have been formulated and are able to be used for future programmes. One young persons’ group was so thrilled with the gardening sessions that it is hoped to carry on the same formula into the future. As one teacher said, “Thank you again to all of you for making it so enjoyable for the kids and us!!!!”. The partnerships made during the life of the project will continue in various ways now the events have ended. Whether they are informal or part of a more structured programme, one of the largest successes for the project has been the partnerships forged through teamwork; continuing them is a key outcome for the longer term.

Legacy

There is a commitment to provide a legacy; this project has produced several oral recordings, videos, articles and documents that can be readily accessed in the public domain.

The outcome of Event 8: *Roll of Honour* was to produce and place a memorial plaque for those Royal Parks employees who died in World War I into one of the parks. With the help of our partners we were able to identify a permanent location at Brompton Cemetery, Chelsea (a place managed by TRP) for the public to visit. This memorial will be used by TRP for future annual remembrance events. For the same event TRPG commissioned a painting on a two-panelled canvas from a British Army veteran and artist living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. They depict the connection between the Royal Hospital and Brompton Cemetery, the last resting place of 2,625 Chelsea Pensioners. These panels now hang in the main office at Brompton Cemetery and are available for public viewing.

Also at Brompton Cemetery, the commemorative garden installed as part of Event 2: *Commemorative World War I Garden*, surrounding the memorial to the Chelsea Pensioners will be managed by TRP to provide an appropriate landscape for a place of peaceful contemplation. Both areas will be interpreted and incorporated into the ongoing 'walks and talks' programme being organised by TRP.

The project has two entries, Event 1: *Buck Hill in the First World War* and Event 6: *Postcards from the park's past*, in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's book called *The Centenary of the First World War: How the Nation Remembered*. This is a nationally-available and highly-illustrated publication, capturing the variety and breadth of the events that took place up and down the country and around the world between 2014 and 2018. This publication will be a lasting reminder of how the country remembered World War I.

A further book, published by The Royal Parks Guild, called *The Royal Parks in the Great War - revealing their part in the conflict*, provides information on how each of the Royal Parks was used during the war, the lives of some of the men who worked there, and the family history and war record of those 24 men employed by The Royal Parks who died in the conflict. This has been given to local study centres within whose areas the parks stand, family descendants, those associated with or who contributed to the project, TRP employees and TRPG members. By depositing them with local studies centres it will ensure that they will be available to researchers in the future. The book is also available to download free from The Royal Parks Guild's website and from The Royal Parks World War I site where it has had over 175 'hits' since June 2019.

All information boards, booklets, guides and leaflets produced during the project will provide an archive that can be used in the future for research, forming part of presentations or 'walks and talks' organised by TRP given to the public. The Royal Parks World War I website is publicly available for at least a further five years. Social media posts made during the project remain, as do the videos uploaded to YouTube. The research carried out into the family histories of the men of the parks who died in World War I provided sometimes forgotten information to the descendants. Of the 24 men who died, eight families were traced to current day relatives. Some were unaware of their family history and the project was able to provide them with details of their relative's war and work records. With this information, and being involved with commemoration events, it spurred on several families to continue their own research.

The experience has forged lasting partnerships between those associated with the project, which can only enhance relationships in the future. Working together we have increased our knowledge of how various entities and establishments interacted with the Royal Parks during World War I. By using these associations and knowledge we can use them to formulate other events for the future.

This report will also give a legacy for the project. It provides information and detail on how the Royal Parks commemorated their role in World War I and will be a record for those who wish to research this in the future.



Event Highlights

Event One: Buck Hill in the First World War (Kensington Gardens)

11 to 24 September 2017

"The tour has given me a different perspective on the park."

Activity Highlights

1,000 plus visitors

Over two weeks in Kensington Gardens, the Camouflage School welcomed 375 school children from eight schools, 99 members of our local community, and over 500 members of the public at two open days to tour a First World War replica trench, built and manned by volunteers. Two 45 minute lesson plans were developed for years 5 and 6 school groups, exploring World War I

35 volunteers

Volunteers and staff received over 716 hours of support and training to:

- Work with young people who had never studied the First World War before.
- Facilitate enjoyable and interesting experiences for people with dementia and learning disabilities.
- Use unfamiliar tools and equipment to realise an ambitious installation.

"The immersive tour was brilliant. It allowed me to somehow understand the feeling of being in the trenches and the life the soldiers would have lived."

A mock 'over ground' trench system was constructed in the park consisting of a dug-out, trench and firing step.

A bespoke outdoor board game was devised for children to explore the history of the Royal Parks in WWI and how home-grown food was important.

The schools' programme was carried out in partnership with Westminster Archives as part of the 'Not Forgotten 2017' event.

14,000 saw the event on Twitter, 2,500 on Facebook and 272 watched the video on Instagram. This was picked up and listed on London events websites.

GetWestLondon featured the Camouflage School and the WWI trench tours. The article features our film of our WWI lead and photos of the project.

Publicity for the event included a 15-minute studio interview on the Robert Elms Show on Radio London, 13 November 2017.

This event is included in the Department of Digital, Culture Media and Sport's commemorative book *The Centenary of the First World War: How the Nation Remembered* (p 157) by DCMS Centenary Publications 2018 as part of the First World War Centenary Partnership ISBN 978-1-5272-2861-0.

"The trench trip was amazing the pupils were really transported into the time period."

"It was great fun going on all the trips and my favourite one was when we went to Kensington Gardens and got to see a replica of a real trench!"



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
16 volunteers - 224 volunteer hours	35 volunteers - 716 hours
240 pupils - 60 pupils in an art project	375 pupils from 8 schools took part in WWI research/ drama /singing sessions
15 elderly people 15 people from community groups	99 people from 7 community groups of which 50+ were elderly
200 members of the public at the Harvest Festival	533 members of the public on the two open days (one at Harvest Festival)

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
The target audience will have a greater understanding of how the military used Kensington Gardens.	Photographs and information boards explained how the park was used during WWI. Artefacts were on display and talks were given to groups on military activities within the park.
Participants will have an appreciation of what 'camouflage' means both in WWI and today	Groups of people were guided through a trench system by members of the 10th Essex Living History Group. Progressing along the trench they were given a talk on what life in the trenches was like and how camouflage made a difference.
The children will experience first-hand 'life in the trenches'	12 Years 5 and 6 school groups were given a 'trench experience' by members of the 10th Essex Living History Group in a mock-up trench system.
Activity sheets completed by the children will consolidate their learning.	2 x 45-minute lesson plans for 12 Years 5 and 6 school groups exploring WWI, camouflage and self-directed research, plus additional worksheets.
Senior citizens will share experiences and memories of families with young people.	A talk and discussion between a group of 11 senior citizens, including Chelsea Pensioners and descendants of those Royal Parks employees who died in WWI, was organised in one of the group visits. Unfortunately, we were unable to invite any young people.
All parts of the project will have visitor feedback forms, school evaluations and notes from planning and preparation meetings.	Feedback and evaluation have been carried out.
Transport for those less able to walk to be provided by Liberty Drives.	Transport was provided by TRP's own vehicles and staff.



"It was a really unique and wonderful experience - I really enjoyed volunteering."

"Kensington Gardens was wonderful as you gave us worksheets and tablets so we could research extra soldiers."

"One thing that I really enjoyed was going to the Royal Parks and going inside the trenches."



Event Two: Commemorative WWI Garden

May 2017 to July 2019

Activity Highlights

This event was completed in association with Battlefields to Butterflies, a partner project managed by The Royal Parks Guild to commemorate the role of the Royal Parks in WWI. The project received 347 hours of voluntary work

Masterclasses were organised to inform students about the ability of World War I battlefields to recolonise with wildflowers soon after the fighting, and how we could use these principles to create our commemorative garden. Using historical survey records we could use the information to formulate our ideas.

Three masterclasses were completed; 8 March and 14 May at Royal Hospital Chelsea and 27 June 2018 at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. We hosted practical exercises in propagation, design and planting together with principles of event display and management.

Planting the wildflower garden at Brompton Cemetery was undertaken with the help of schoolchildren and Chelsea Pensioners.

"I had left it mud, nothing but water, shell holes and mud the most gloomy dreary abomination of desolation the mind could imagine; and now, in the summer of 1917 no words could express the beauty of it. The dreary, dismal mud was baked white and pure – dazzling white. White daisies, red poppies, and a blue flower, great masses of them, stretching for miles and miles." William Orpen; the inspiration for our associated project, Battlefields to Butterflies.

Elements of the wildflower garden and memorial plaque were exhibited as part of the Battlefields to Butterflies WWI tribute garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and it was featured on the BBC's national show coverage. An estimated 25,000 people went through the pop-up garden. Over 225 members of the public who visited the tribute garden contributed to our comments book.

David Domoney, ITV's celebrity gardener, produced and fronted a video for The Royal Parks Guild called 'Battlefields to Butterflies' showing the exhibit, wildflower garden and memorial stone. It was viewed more than 589 times on YouTube.

The renovation of the Chelsea Pensioners' Memorial in Brompton Cemetery and the grass area surrounding it was made possible with the help of our partners, the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

A video presentation showing the finishing touches to the new wildflower garden is available on The Royal Parks' website and YouTube.

The finalisation of Stage 2 of this event was joined with the Roll of Honour event for the unveiling of the memorial plaque and commemorative garden in Brompton Cemetery.

"It was also a pleasure spending the day with the pensioners who had both enthusiasm and great input to the design process."

"The practical tasks were great; they were a nice addition. I felt the work we did was important."



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
40 horticulture students	3 masterclass days with 25 students = 75 student days
8 volunteers - 96 hours	Masterclass - 13 volunteers 208 hours Stage 1 garden - 8 volunteers 98 hours Stage 2 garden - 14 volunteers 41 hours
200 members of the public visit showcase garden	25,000 (RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show) plus 100 (Brompton Cemetery)
5 community groups	2 community groups = 16 people (Hampton Court) 1 school group x 12 children (Hampton Court) 1 school group x 8 children (Brompton Cemetery)

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
Creation of a temporary exhibit, a pop-up garden where after display, elements of it will be incorporated into The Royal Parks Brompton Cemetery Conservation Project.	In association with Battlefields to Butterflies, partnered by Historic Royal Palaces, a garden exhibit was shown at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018. Design elements of the wildflower landscape were used as the basis for the commemorative wildflower garden at Brompton Cemetery.
Scope the project, identify partners and create programme for garden exhibition in 2018.	Four partners were identified to complete this major undertaking.
Prepare an apprentice programme to support the design and full development of the WWI garden by arranging masterclass sessions.	Two masterclass days hosted by the Royal Hospital Chelsea and one by Historic Royal Palaces at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018.
The participants will gain skills in research.	The children were asked to carry out research into their family or other aspect of WWI that they thought was relevant to them.
Develop knowledge of WWI and horticulture	The participants were told about the wildflower surveys carried out in 1916 on the battlefields of the Somme and how the results of these surveys help us today.
The participants will gain skills: - in show case presentation. - in judging horticulture shows. - in garden design and construction. - in how to take a horticultural garden design and add it to an actual garden.	Five volunteer guest speakers gave talks on many aspects of garden design and presentation. Practical sessions and garden tours were organised as part of the masterclass days. Two of the volunteer guest speakers were Gold Medal winners at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show as garden designers and constructors.
Design and plant sourcing in preparation for link with the lottery-funded Brompton Cemetery Conservation Project	The grassed area around the Chelsea Pensioners' Memorial was chosen to be turned into a wildflower garden. The final touches were sown by a group of school children and Chelsea Pensioners.



"Such thought and care given to this wonderful tribute to our heroes. Thank you!"

"I'm crying, lovely and moving. Let's have a world of peace, please."



Event Three: A Park in Wartime (Richmond Park)

18 and 23 September 2018

Activity Highlights

This event centred around a day focused on schools and participation in the Richmond Park open day and garnered local coverage in the Richmond and Twickenham Times and Your Local Guardian.

In preparation, volunteers:

- researched and wrote articles for exhibition boards and TRP's website
- led WWI activities at both the open day and the schools' day
- stewarded the open day exhibit
- photographed the events

A presentation on the role of Richmond Park in WWI was given to volunteers so they could pass on their knowledge to children attending the Holly Lodge Centre

"I was surprised, and delighted, at the range of exhibits/activities."

"Educating people in a fun way."

On 18 September 2018 two school classes visited the World War I Schools Day for 2-hour sessions. Activities included:

- signal flag semaphoring and decoding
- planting and harvesting heritage crops
- hospital bandaging and laundry

A session was held for 15 young people with special educational needs.

On 23 September 1,100 members of the public visited the Richmond Park open day.

The open day stand comprised of an exhibit with eight display boards on the wartime history of Richmond Park. It centred around a theme of innovation, technology, food production and military hospitals, plus the exploration of men's and women's military services undertaken in the park.

Activities included

- self-guided WWI park walk (70 leaflets distributed)
- signal flag semaphoring
- a balloon apron activity challenging visitors to create and fly paper airplanes
- costumed living history interpreters
- recreated aerial ropeway transport system
- photo booth with props for selfies



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
8 volunteers in training and for events	4 volunteers - 47 hours in research & preparation 10 volunteers x 7 hours for the event = 70 hours
2 x 30 children	2 Year 6 classes attended WWI School Day = 40 pupils + 4 volunteers = 24 hours
200 members of the public	1,100 + members of the public attended the event
Planned outputs	Actual outputs
The target audience will have a greater understanding of how Richmond Park was adapted and used during WWI.	Information boards were on display and volunteers were on hand to answer visitor queries.
Visitors, including children and users of the Holly Lodge Centre, will be able to gain an awareness of the park in WWI	375 pupils from 8 schools took part in WWI research/drama /singing sessions. A session for young people aged 16 to 19 with special needs was organised in the Holly Lodge Centre to inform them of the importance of gardening and the role of Richmond Park in WWI (See Event 5: WWI Food Production and Demonstration Allotments)
Participants will interact with the living history actors bringing WWI alive to them.	Three members of the 10th Essex Living History Group interacted with visitors at the open day event.
Activity resources will support the learning.	Interactive activities were devised for the open day, including flag signalling and a barrage balloon game.
Completion of visitor feedback forms will contribute to the evaluation of the project and inform the next open day activities.	Following the departure of our project officer the workload for the temporary replacement meant we were not able to organise a feedback survey.
The guided walk will be a resource available to the public after the completion of the project.	An A4 sized paper showing a walk around Richmond Park was produced (70 distributed) highlighting the areas where there were WWI camps, installations and events



“Outstanding”

“The range of activities and pace was excellent - children engaged and enthused”



Event Four: Bushy Park in the First World War

14 May 2017 and 8 March to 30 April 2019

Activity Highlights

This event was held on Chestnut Sunday 2017, with the help of the History Group of the Teddington Society and the Friends of Bushy and Home Parks, with a total of 100 volunteer hours.

10th Essex Living History Group took part in the parade along Chestnut Avenue in Bushy Park, watched by approximately 5,000 visitors.

Afterwards 350 adults and children visited the marquee shared with the Friends of Bushy and Home Parks to see our World War I display.

Members of the project group were on hand to discuss and explain the information on two interpretation boards.

In 2019, three schools (304 pupils) were hosted for six sessions of World War I history. Teachers noted that it helped them add to their 'exploring a local place' aspect of the Primary Curriculum.

School children investigated the impact of World War I on Bushy Park. They had the chance to complete practical activities that explored the challenges faced by British people during World War I. The session activities were designed to encourage children to navigate through history and environmental themes in Bushy Park. There were elements of personal challenge, teamwork and independent learning.



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
8 volunteers - 44 hours	Research - 4 volunteers - 65 hours Event - 5 volunteers - 35 hours
200 members of the public	350 visitors to the marquee, 5,000 audience for the parade
30 pupils + 30 people with special needs Engagement of special needs school	School days - 6 sessions = 304 pupils As the commitment in the Project Plan for this element was similar, we added this with Event 5: WWI food production and demonstration allotments

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
Participate and interact with the living history group	A research paper on WWI allotments was available for visitor reading. Three members of the 10th Essex Living History Group interacted with visitors with genuine WWI artefacts.
10th Essex volunteers taking part in the marching parade down Chestnut Avenue	Three members of the 10th Essex Living History Group took part in the Chestnut Avenue parade.
Companion Cycling participate in parade with WWI theme.	Companion Cycling were unable to take part in a WWI themed parade.
Have resources available for schools to continue to teach children about WWI after the project.	Learning resources were developed by the Field Studies Council (KS2: Investigating WWI Allotments) to inform the children about the role of Bushy Park in WWI and how vegetable growing was so important. This is included in Event 5: WWI food production and demonstration allotments



Event Five: WWI Food Production & Demonstration Allotments

Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park, Richmond Park and Greenwich Park

Activity Highlights

Utilising the allotments in four of the Royal Parks we sourced vintage varieties of vegetables mentioned in The Royal Parks' booklet 'Model Allotment Gardens for Vegetable Culture' published in 1917. Volunteers at the allotments sowed, nurtured and harvested them.

Six local schools attended five sessions on subjects such as the need for allotments and vegetable growing 100 years ago as well as practical exercises in sowing their own seeds. From the 270 schools' pupil/sessions planned we undertook 898; over 3 times the number stated in our Project Plan.

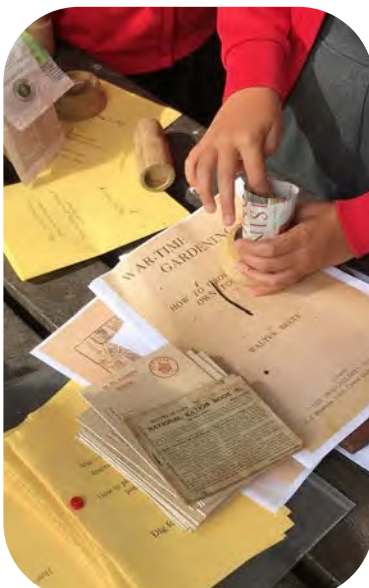
A group of young people with special educational needs were involved in allotment work and classroom activities related to World War I over a two-year period. The Holly Lodge Centre developed a sensory session to help bring history to life. We used sight, sound, taste, touch and smell to help them explore WWI.

We did not achieve our target of engaging 52 SEN and vulnerable elderly persons. However, we engaged 15 young SEN people over a longer period undertaking a total of 576 person/sessions over 2 years.

"I have encountered a problem that could not possibly have affected allotment holders in 1918, namely the attack by ring-necked parakeets on the flowers of the runner beans"

"I didn't know you could eat things from the ground"

Making 'trench cake' by pupils with complex disabilities at the Holly Lodge Centre - "This is nicer than I expected" "Everyone has eaten it!"



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
4 volunteers x 16 sessions x 4 hours = 256 hours total at allotments	22 volunteers contributing 1,285 hours over two years.
8 x 30 sessions = 240 pupils	5 school sessions = 239 pupils
4 elderly & cultural groups	7 community groups = 179 people
12 young people & 10 elderly vulnerable people	15 young people with special needs for 24 sessions
200 members of the public	Members of the public had free access to the allotments and numbers were not counted

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
Volunteers will learn new skills in growing specific vegetables, presenting research and understanding how food was grown and shared during WWI.	Allotment gardens in Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park, Richmond Park and Greenwich Park were supplied with WWI varieties of vegetables and asked to cultivate them during 2017 and 2018.
Volunteers will share their knowledge of help and advice which was given to the population to help them become self-sufficient.	A sensory session was developed for special needs children at the Holly Lodge Victorian Garden.
Schoolchildren will be encouraged to 'grow their own' vegetables at school after training sessions in WWI history and plant growing.	A school programme was held at the Holly Lodge Centre and Victorian Garden.
A resource activity sheet will be created to consolidate YP learning and be a legacy for the project.	Further allotment sessions are planned post project at the Holly Lodge Centre and Victorian Garden.
To train 12 young people to carry out interviews for the Oral History project.	Due to staff changes the momentum for collecting oral history from allotment work was lost and so it was included as part of Event 8: Roll of Honour.



"I would be sad if I didn't eat anything too"

"The range of activities and pace was excellent"

"I loved learning about all the food people used to eat in WWI"

Event Six:

Postcards from the Park's Past (The Home Depot), The Regent's Park

8 to 19 May 2018

Activity Highlights

This event was carried out in partnership with The Postal Museum. 17 volunteer positions contributed 234 hours.

Over two weeks in The Regent's Park, almost 1,000 visitors worked a shift in the sorting office at the Pop-Up Home Depot to find out more about the gargantuan task of getting mail to the troops during World War I, including:

- 199 school children
- 179 members of the local community including Penfold Community Hub; Regent's Park Conservation Group; Third Age at the Regent's Park Estate; Open Age; Carers Network; and Dragon Hall.
- 585 visitors at public open days

Three 45-minute lesson plans were developed for Key Stage 2 school groups, supporting cross-curricular learning, focused on growing plants, orienteering and The Regent's Park's history.

Six interpretation boards explored the history of the Home Depot, the nearby hospitals and the park in WWI, as well as opportunities to view the Postal Museum's Last Post exhibition.

Publicity for the event included a 15-minute studio interview on the Jo Good Show on Radio London, 18 April 2018.

Print coverage appeared in :

- The Mail on Sunday
- Evening Standard
- Camden New Journal
- This is London
- Family Tree
- Double page in luxury local title, The Resident

This event is included in the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's commemorative book *The Centenary of the First World War: How the Nation Remembered* (p 204) published by DCMS Centenary Publications 2018 as part of the First World War Centenary Partnership ISBN 978-1-5272-2861-0.

"I really enjoyed volunteering and the experience has given me new confidence."



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
16 volunteers - 162 hours	1 volunteer - 35 hours preparation of props 12 volunteers - 187 hours at the event 4 volunteers - 12 hours at schools' theatre
260 pupils	4 schools = 199 pupils
An art project in lieu of the Dazzle Exhibition '	Art project = 199 pupils in classroom at 4 schools
15 people from diverse groups	179 people from 7 community groups
200 members of the public	585 members of the public attended the open days

Planned outputs	Actual outputs
The target audience will have a greater understanding of: how important it was for the troops to receive mail, the volume of parcels sent by their loved ones and well-wishers, how this WWI depot was operationally the largest in England.	The Big Wheel Theatre Company was employed to portray how the receipt of mail was important to the troops and how women became more involved with the delivery of mail. Interactive parcel and letter sorting activities were developed by the theatre group to show the vast numbers involved and the process of delivering mail to the Front.
The participants will begin to understand the role that the Royal Parks played in supporting the troops and WWI campaign	A walk-and-talk was organised on the open days, as well as indoor talks on group visits outlining the role of The Regent's Park in WWI.
School pupils will actively be involved with the 'pop up' post office and the 10th Essex Regiment, gaining a real-life experience	We commissioned The Big Wheel Theatre Company to perform a 'Post-Enders' production acting out women's fight for equality, life at the Home Depot and 'Tommy's' return from the Front. Props were used to provide an authentic appearance and activities based on postal themes gave an interactive experience.
Research with volunteers and devise a wartime walk/self-trail guide.	An orienteering event was organised by the Field Studies Council to navigate around the site of the Home Depot to develop knowledge of history and geography. This was used by all schools (199 pupils) (KS2 Geography) and families during the open days.
Activity sheets and postcards completed by the children and visitors will contribute to the evaluation of the project. A competition will engage a wider audience than those visiting the event	Our partner, The Postal Museum, held school activity lessons for schools local to The Regent's Park relating to WWI post sorting and delivery. As part of this lesson an art project based on producing and posting postcards was developed.

"Thank you so much for including me on yesterday's trip. It was both fascinating and informative and very well presented."

"Every session was fantastic; the range was great. Each activity leader made their session engaging and great fun. The day offered wider opportunities for the children and links with the history curriculum."

"Learning that one parcel to the soldiers contained a whole roast chicken has really stuck in my mind!"

Event Seven: What Did You Do in the war?

May 2017 to July 2019

“Thanks for your excellent talk ..., it went down very well”

Activity Highlights

This project was used to tie in with, and cross-promote, other World War I activities in several Royal Parks as they were defined 100 years ago. These included working with Historic Royal Palaces and Historic England on the Battlefield to Butterflies events.

The aim was to introduce the history of the parks during the First World War to people who use the Royal Parks, via a travelling outdoor exhibition.

Research was carried out into the social and military use of the parks to populate the exhibition which was set up in five parks

- Cumberland Green, The Regent's Park, 8-19 May 2017
- Buck Hill, Kensington Gardens, 8-10 September 2017
- Duck Island, St James's Park, 4 July-4 August 2018
- Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, 19 July 2019 (the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919)
- The Chapel, Brompton Cemetery, 26 July 2019

A series of 13 talks were given to 549 people in community groups around London to highlight the different ways in which the parks contributed to and were changed by the war, and the way in which this history is relevant to the parks today.

A total of 121 volunteer hours were used for research, talks and stewarding.

The Dazzle Exhibition event was amended due to the Sackler Gallery having a long-term exhibition programme that could not include our proposals. NLHF agreed to a change from the Dazzle Exhibition to a schools' art project allied to Event 6: Postcards from the park's past and a series of outdoor exhibitions.

“Thank you so much for such a fascinating and enlightening talk, many of the fellows have told me how much they enjoyed it.”



“It was a fascinating eye-opener on these places which we know so well. We were all enthralled!”



Planned involvement

A series of outdoor exhibitions

Actual involvement

12 talks x 1 volunteer = 26 hours to a total audience of 549
5 venues for displays with a total of 5 volunteers = 30 hours
1 volunteer for research for information boards = 5 hours
4 volunteers to research and produce 18 blogs = 60 hours
Being 'open-house', exhibition visitor numbers were not counted

Planned outputs

Create a number of mobile exhibition boards to explain the WWI history of the parks.

Actual outputs

Interpretation boards were erected at 5 indoor and open-air venues and used to highlight the activities of the parks. Mobile exhibitions were held at:

- Cumberland Green, The Regent's Park - 8 to 19 May 2017
- Buck Hill, Kensington Gardens - 8 to 10 September 2017
- Duck Island, St James's Park - 4 July to 4 August 2018
- Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park - 19 July 2019
- The Chapel, Brompton Cemetery - 26 July 2019

Highlight the different ways in which the parks contributed to, and were changed by, the war, and the way in which this history is relevant to the parks today.

A series of 12 talks over 2 years was given to local community groups highlighting the role played by the parks in WWI. A series of 20 blogs on subjects relating to social issues and life associated with the parks was uploaded onto the TRP WWI website

Tie in with and cross-promote other WWI activities in the parks.

A high degree of collaboration was forged with The Royal Parks Guild's project called Battlefields to Butterflies which included some of the original Royal Parks of 100 years ago before they were divided between different organisations. The research from this project helped to form the Battlefields to Butterflies events carried out with English Heritage, Osborne House, Isle of Wight; Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court Palace; and the City of London at the Guildhall Yard.



Event Eight: The Royal Parks Roll of Honour (Brompton Cemetery)

7 November 2018

"It was a wonderful day and thank you for helping to make it a successful and sincere act of remembrance"

Activity Highlights

The 24 men of The Royal Parks who died were identified, researched and their stories told. Descendants of three men were interviewed as part of the oral history project to record their family stories.

An engraved slate plaque, giving the names of those who died in WWI, was unveiled at a memorial service in Brompton Cemetery, attended by over 100 guests including 10 family descendants. It was also displayed at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2018

The memorial service was led by the Chaplain to the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court, with flag bearers from the Royal British Legion, Chelsea Pensioners and a bugler from the Welsh Guards playing the Last Post. The plaque was unveiled by Loyd Grossman, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Royal Parks charity.

The Royal Parks Guild commissioned a diptych painting from a British Army veteran and artist living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. They depict the connection between the Royal Hospital and Brompton Cemetery, the last resting place of 2,625 Chelsea Pensioners. This is now displayed at the main office in Brompton Cemetery.

31 volunteers worked a total of 314 hours

Broadcast coverage: ITV London, BBC Surrey, LBC London, Press Association video

Media coverage trade: Pro Landscaper, Horticulture Week x 2 (feature and an analysis piece)

Media coverage impact:

- ITV London reaches 842,000 viewers – informing a huge number of Londoners about the role of The Royal Park in WWI and highlighting Brompton Cemetery as a visitor location rich in history.
- Coverage in the online version of the Daily Telegraph, with an average monthly readership in 2018 of approximately 200,000, raised awareness of The Royal Parks involvement in WWI to a national audience.
- Visitors spent around 2 minutes looking at blog posts such as the stories of Royal Parks gardeners Arthur William Berry and Hori Tribe which were shared on 12 November 2018 on social media.

Media coverage social:

- Website content and WWI related posts were shared and tweeted from early-mid November
- Total reach was 28k, resulting in 33 new Facebook followers and 196 website page views – up 277% on the same period last year
- A short video of the ceremony was created resulting in it reaching 7,500 people on Facebook and viewed almost 800 times.

"It was very special and particularly as it brought so many Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren together."

"It is comforting to know these young men have a lasting legacy in this country. ... A good seed sown for future generations."



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
4 volunteers - 36 hours	4 volunteers - 74 hours in preparation 23 volunteers - 115 hours stewarding the event
15 elderly people	13 Chelsea Pensioners involved
Planned outputs	Actual outputs
Recognise the 5 families' stories in the final conference and report materials.	The 24 men of The Royal Parks who died were identified, researched and their stories told. These are available on The Royal Parks WWI website.
Volunteers will have gained experience in the techniques needed to research historic records and genealogy data bases.	5 volunteers gained experience in on-line research into family history.
There will be a base of personal stories and WWI knowledge which is retained in The Royal Parks archives and available on the web.	The descendants of three men were interviewed as part of the oral history project to record their family stories. The results are available on The Royal Parks WWI website. Freda, a 104-year-old, was interviewed about her memories of walking in Hyde Park on 19 July 1919.
Place a tribute in the park headquarters to be a permanent record	An engraved slate plaque, giving the names of the 24 Royal Parks men who died in WWI, was produced free of charge to the project and unveiled at a ceremony in Brompton Cemetery, which is managed by The Royal Parks. The Royal Parks Guild commissioned a painting from a Chelsea Pensioner depicting "the connection between the Royal Hospital and Brompton Cemetery". This is hung in the main office at Brompton Cemetery.



Event Nine: Project Exhibition...Into the Peace

28 to 31 March 2019

Activity Highlights

An exhibition was held over three days in partnership with the Royal Hospital Chelsea to display the results of our research and events which had taken place in the parks.

Opened by the Governor of the Royal Hospital, the exhibition included

- 22 information boards
- A looped visual presentation
- Original artefacts and family letters
- Living history demonstrations
- Three talks by guest speakers.

250 copies of an 8-page booklet called ...into the Peace were produced by The Royal Parks Guild for the exhibition.

Over 750 visitors and guests entered the exhibition. A school group and Chelsea Pensioners from the Royal Hospital were hosted and 33 volunteers provided 1,605 hours of work.

Following his visit to the exhibition, a Chelsea Pensioner was inspired to write and recite two poems, based on the theme of the Royal Parks in World War I, for the gathered visitors.

Visitor books asking for comments received an overwhelming positive response to the content and meaning of the exhibition.

"Very interesting, I had no idea that so much went on at the Royal Parks and here at the Royal Hospital"

"Thank you so much for the wonderful exhibition commemorating our great grandad ... and all the other parks' workers who died for our country"



"Superb exhibition, excellent presentation. Thank you for the talk"



Planned involvement	Actual involvement
10 volunteers - 200 hours	<p>Design and preparation of the exhibition 5 volunteers - 1,422 hours</p> <p>28 volunteer stewards for the event over 3 days - 169 hours</p> <p>1 x school group of 11 pupils</p> <p>750 guests and members of the public attended over 3 days</p>
Planned outputs	Actual outputs
<p>The exhibition will provide a visual and audio record of the events throughout the project</p>	<p>22 information boards showing how the Royal Parks were used during WWI were presented at the event. Original artefacts were displayed.</p> <p>The Postal Museum provided artefacts from the army postal service along with actors in period costume explaining their uses.</p> <p>The 10th Essex Living History Group provided a section of trench work and explained what life was like during WWI.</p> <p>A Chelsea Pensioner wrote a poem about the project and recited it during one of the open days.</p> <p>The Royal Parks Guild commissioned a Chelsea Pensioner to create a painting called <i>Battlefields to Butterflies</i>. This was displayed at the exhibition and is at Brompton Cemetery.</p> <p>A floral/poppy arch was created around the entrance to the exhibition.</p>
Keynote speakers from partnership organisations.	There were 3 keynote speakers from partner organisations.
Workshops to discuss the progress of projects and look for ways forward to continue themes	A review, rather than a workshop, was carried out at the beginning of April.
Networking of all partner organisations	Seven of our major partners took part in the event.



Partners

Our thanks go to the following organisations and individuals who have helped with the World War I commemoration project over the past two and a half years:

*The Royal Parks
The Royal Parks Guild
The National Lottery Heritage Fund
10th Essex Living History Group
Royal Hospital Chelsea & Chelsea Pensioners
Historic Royal Palaces
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
London Parks and Gardens Trust
The Postal Museum
Big Wheel Theatre Company
OCS Ltd
On the Record
Hearsum Collection
Worshipful Company of Gardeners
Royal British Legion
London In Bloom
The Holly Lodge Centre, Richmond Park
City of Westminster Archive Centre
Richmond Park Charitable Trust
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
Scotscape
Field Studies Council
Sustain / Capital Growth
The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks
The Friends of Brompton Cemetery
Teddington Society History Group
Greenwich Park History Group
BlueBird Boats Limited, Hyde Park
Joseph Rochford Gardens Limited
Volunteers at Kensington Gardens allotments
Volunteers at Greenwich Park allotments
Royal Parks horticultural apprentices
Those horticultural apprentices and students from partner organisations*

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Page 6 - V Smith (bottom left)

Page 8 - Holly Lodge Centre (bottom right)

Page 24 - The Royal Parks (bottom left)

Page 25 - The Holly Lodge Centre (bottom left and right)

Page 28 - Field Studies Council (bottom right)

Page 29 The Royal Parks (bottom left) and Holly Lodge Centre (bottom centre and right)

Page 30 - The Royal Parks (top right and bottom centre)

Page 33 - The Royal Parks (top left) and R Flenley (bottom right)

Page 35 - V Smith (bottom)

Page 36 - V Smith (bottom left) and M Fitt (bottom right)

Page 37 - R Allen (bottom left)



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