

MOTHERHOOD, LOSS AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Conference

Wednesday 5 – Thursday 6 September 2018
Senate House
Malet Street
London WC1E 7HU



REMEMBER TOGETHER



INSTITUTE OF
HISTORICAL
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SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
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Motherhood, Loss and the First World War

The extraordinary death tolls suffered on the fighting fronts of the First World War gave rise to devastating and unprecedented levels of loss for individuals and communities across Europe and the wider world. Indeed, bereavement became so widespread during the conflict that it can rightly be regarded as one of the defining experiences of the war. Yet historians have had relatively little to say about wartime loss, and the bereaved have not been widely acknowledged or remembered during the centenary commemorations of the conflict.

This conference seeks to shed light on this much overlooked theme and has been organised by Big Ideas, the London Centre for Public History and Heritage and the Institute of Historical Research. It is part of Motherhood, Loss and the First World War, an ongoing community commemoration project led by Big Ideas and funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the National Lottery grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

Free resources, project ideas and funding are available to involve community groups across the UK in the project. Contact mothers@big-ideas.org for more information.

Get involved

Motherhood, Loss and the First World War is a community commemoration project which acknowledges the universality of bereavement as the defining experience of the conflict, with a special focus on the impact on mothers – an overlooked aspect of grief from the period. It brings to light new areas of historical research into the impact bereavement had on societies in Britain during and after the First World War.

Community groups across the UK are invited to engage with this project between now and the end of November 2018. Big Ideas defines a community group as eight or more individuals.

Groups can access a free resource pack, which shares stories of mothers bereaved during the First World War, and an emotive series of letter exchanges between mothers and sons who served during the First World War. These resources bring to light mothers' experiences during and after the conflict and invite communities across the country to remember them.

Some of the ways groups can engage with the project include:

- Reading letter exchanges between mothers and sons who served during the First World War
- Responding creatively to the stories in the resource pack and letter exchanges. This could be through music, creative writing, or other creative activities such as painting, mosaic-making, arts and crafts, or another medium of their choice
- Researching the experiences of local women who lost sons or daughters during the war
- Visiting graves or memorials to remember the mothers of those who died whilst serving during the war
- Sharing these stories with their local community.

A series of workshops are being led by Big Ideas across the country for women's groups. These workshops aim to empower women by connecting them with their community, and developing citizenship, civil society and advocacy skills. They develop confidence in communication as well as sharing stories of mothers' experiences during the First World War. The workshops are free and funding is available to ensure that there are no costs for participating groups (for example, for venue hire, refreshments or transport costs). Contact the Big Ideas team for more details.

Groups can receive up to £200 in funding through the Big Ideas small-scale reimbursement scheme, to remove any financial barriers to involvement in the project.

Motherhood, Loss and the First World War is a UK-wide project, led by Big Ideas and funded by MHCLG with an additional National Lottery grant from the Big Lottery Fund to work in the Home Nations.

Discover more about the project at big-ideas.org/project/motherhood/.

Contact the Big Ideas team to access free resources and join the project by emailing mothers@big-ideas.org.

Wednesday 5 September

12:45 - 13:15

Registration

13:15 - 13:30

Opening remarks

Edward Madigan (Royal Holloway) and **Virginia Crompton** (Big Ideas)

13:30 - 15:00

Panel session 1

'It was like burning my heart': Susan Owen, maternal grief, and Wilfred Owen's posthumous reputation

Jane Potter (Oxford Brookes)

Ev'ry Mother's Son': Displaying Maternal Bereavement through Military Jewellery in the First World War

Penny Streeter (University of Sussex)

Britain's First World War Widows: The Forgotten Legion

Andrea Hetherington

15:00 - 15:30

Refreshments

15:30 - 17:00

Panel session 2

'Among the rest, "my boy"': Mothers and the Imperial War Graves Commission

Lynelle Howson (Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Fixed Forever in Grief: Medicalizing and Politicizing Mother's Grief in the First World War

Bridget Keown (Northeastern University)

Aberdeen's Brasic Fishin' Wifies: The History of Loss within Aberdeen's Fishing Families during the First World War

Cameron Stewart (University of Aberdeen)

18:30

Keynote lecture

National Service, Personal Sacrifice: The Cultural Politics of Mourning Mothers during and after the First World War

Susan Grayzel (Utah State University)

Thursday 6 September

09:45 - 10:15

Registration

10:15 - 10:30

Opening remarks

10:30 - 12:00

Panel session 3

Children and the Legacies of Loss in Interwar Britain

Michael Roper (University of Essex)

'One is alone in one's grief': Fraternal Loss and Filial Love in the Great War

Linda Maynard (Birkbeck)

'Oh, mothers, when will ye rouse yourselves?' Bradford Women's Humanity League, 1916-18

Eve Haskins (University of Leeds)

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch

13:00 - 14:30

*Community Engagement
session*

Chaired by Sarah Giles (Big Ideas) with participating
community groups

14:30 - 15:00

Refreshments

15:00 - 16:30

Panel session 4

*Forging National Remembrance through Individual Reflection:
How bereft mothers shaped the Imperial War Museum*

Catherine Long (Imperial War Museum)

Lost and Found: Francis Mond and his mother Angela

Holly Trusted (Victoria and Albert Museum)

*Something to Remember Him By: German Mothers and the
Visual Culture of Mourning, 1914-1919*

Brian Feltman (Georgia Southern University)

18:30

**Music Performance on the theme of
Motherhood and Loss**

Clare Connors and Guests

Biography - Susan R. Grayzel

Susan R. Grayzel received her AB Magna cum laude with Highest Honors in History and Literature from Harvard University and her MA and PhD in Late Modern European History from the University of California at Berkeley. She is Professor of History at Utah State University and the author of *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (1999); *Women and the First World War* (2002); *The First World War: A Brief History with Documents* (2012); and *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (2012). Among her publications during the centenary are essays in the three volume *Cambridge History of the First World War* (2014) and the second edition of the *Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (2014). Her most recent publication on the war is the volume *Gender and the Great War* (2017), which she co-edited with Tammy M. Proctor.

Biography - Clare Connors

Clare is an award winning British composer living in London. She has written commissions for London Arts, Women in Music and the PRSF, as well as critically acclaimed albums for the Balanescu Quartet, 'Possessed' and 'Luminitza'. She wrote, played and produced for the Balanescu Quartet from 1991 to 2001 and after formed her own group Red-Angel, writing and performing her own material. More success followed with 'Big Small and Sideways', a Women in Music commission for the London Jazz Festival. 'Traffic Ocean Archway' was commissioned by the Arts Council and Islington Council in 2013. Her first orchestral piece for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, 'Corelli Leaves' was performed in the Royal Festival Hall during the same year.

Throughout her career she has enjoyed collaborating with a range of artists, from David Byrne to Kraftwerk, Carla Bley to Spiritualised, continuing to experiment across musical genres.



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WiFi information:
Network: UoL Conferences

For further information contact:

*Institute of Historical Research
Senate House
Malet Street
London
WC1E 7HU*

Email: ihr.events@sas.ac.uk

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