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BIG IDEAS

Remember Together 2017-2019 Summary Report

Overview

Remember Together was our landmark inclusive commemoration programme marking the centenary of the First World War in 2018. It brought together communities from across the UK to recognise the full breadth of contributions made during the war - by women, by people from across the Commonwealth, by mothers, by overlooked figures such as Walter Tull. The programme launched with *The Unremembered*, which recognised the contribution of the Labour Corps: individuals who had long been excluded from mainstream remembrance due to race, gender, status, and nationality. The project challenged traditional narratives of commemoration and ensured that those previously left out of national memory were acknowledged.

Who owns our history?

Our projects during the First World War Centenary challenged how we remember, what we remember, who can remember. Projects like *The Unremembered* showed how commemoration that has been owned by the institutions could be owned by the people themselves.

Operating through six distinct programme strands and active in over 700 locations, Remember Together brought untold and marginalised stories into the heart of mainstream national commemoration. It reached communities across every part of the UK, engaging participants who had never previously taken part in First World War commemoration, and leaving a lasting legacy of strengthened community networks, raised confidence, and transformed historical understanding.

Programme at a glance

50,747

individuals took part across the UK

723

community partner organisations involved in 2018 alone

269,725

people attended Remember Together events as audiences

10.9M+

people reached via social and digital media in 2018

60.6M+

total press reach across Remember Together and Ringing Remembers

Programme strands

The Unremembered: World War One's Army of Workers

This strand shone a long-overdue light on the contributions of workers from British colonies across Africa, the Caribbean, India and China who served in the Labour Corps supporting the British war effort. These individuals were largely absent from conventional commemorative culture.

Community groups across the UK researched local Labour Corps graves and memorials: 52% of participating groups sought out this history in their own communities, with 32% doing so for the first time. A remarkable 86% of Unremembered community leaders reported that their group had shifted in their awareness of the contributions made by people beyond Western Europe. Participants in cities and towns discovered for the first time that men from India, the British West Indies and China had fought and laboured on their behalf – and that these stories belonged to everyone.

27.9% of all Remember Together participants identified as being from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the power of these stories to attract communities who had historically felt excluded from mainstream commemoration.

"This has demonstrated what it is to be inclusive. Often I go to these sorts of places and events and I don't recognise myself in the audience but this has truly been inclusive."

— Participant, The Unremembered

Tull100 – Football Remembers

Tull100 commemorated Walter Tull: the first officer of Black heritage to lead white British troops in combat, and a professional footballer of extraordinary talent whose story had been largely overlooked for a century. Working through football clubs, academies, and schools, the strand used sport as a bridge into heritage and history.

The results were transformative. 78% of Tull100 groups had never previously participated in any WW1 commemoration. After the project, participants reported an 83% increase in confidence in delivering heritage projects. Prior to involvement, only 17% of Tull100 groups felt confident; after participation, 100% described themselves as very confident or confident. The programme catalysed powerful conversations about race, identity, and belonging, connecting young people from diverse backgrounds to an inspiring role model.

"This all started with the Walter Tull project. It's grown out of all proportion. We want to create a better environment here, where boys and girls feel valued and cared for regardless of ethnicity."

— Tull100 participant

A standout example was Middlesbrough FC Academy, whose Under-12 players visited their local mosque as part of the project, the first such interaction for many families involved. They created a lasting intercommunity relationship that extended far beyond the programme itself, running continuously until 2024.

Motherhood, Loss and the First World War

This strand brought the experiences of bereaved mothers to the centre of WW1 commemoration, exploring grief, sacrifice and the domestic impact of war that conventional military history has too often marginalised. 62% of participating groups connected with another community group as part of their involvement, generating lasting intercommunity networks.

The strand was launched on BBC Women's Hour, bringing these stories to a national audience and affirming the programme's commitment to placing women's wartime experiences alongside those of soldiers. Innovative projects, including the #I Am A Yoruba Mother WW1 initiative by British Nigerians in London, used creative writing and art to explore the experiences of mothers whose sons served in the Carrier Corps, writing letters in Yoruba to bring those voices into modern life. Among others, this was presented at our innovative and unique conference that brought together community voices with academic research on the subject. It was accompanied by an exhibition of creative responses, and a newly commissioned piece of classical violin music, all taking place at the Institute of Historical Research.

Trailblazers: World War One's Inspirational Women

Trailblazers celebrated the remarkable achievements of women during the First World War period, from munitions workers and nurses to campaigners and leaders whose contributions remained under-taught and under-celebrated. 84% of Trailblazer groups reported a meaningful change in awareness of women's roles in WW1, and 42% of groups went further by presenting their research at public presentations or school assemblies, embedding these stories into their communities for the long term.

The strand was championed by The Telegraph's education correspondent and featured in the TES, helping to drive school engagement and position the programme as a leading educational resource for diverse history.

Ringling Remembers

Ringling Remembers was a national call to action: recruit 1,400 new bell ringers – one for every bell ringer who died in the First World War. The campaign ended with 2,846 new recruits, almost double the target, drawn from every corner of the UK, including 21 from Northern Ireland, 55 from Wales, and 25 from Scotland. On 11 November 2018, 4,025 towers rang simultaneously, an unprecedented worldwide record.

The social impact extended well beyond the commemorative moment. Twenty new bands of ringers were formed and 14 previously silent towers rang again. For isolated individuals, the project provided a new community, new skills, and a renewed sense of belonging. The Ringling Remembers Facebook group attracted 825 new members, generating nearly 24,000 reactions and sustained peer community across the country.

"Ringling the bells for Armistice Sunday was the most moving and overwhelming experience."

— Julie Clayton, Normanton on Trent

Outcomes and impact

Community Cohesion and Social Connection

Nearly half of all Remember Together groups worked with other organisations in their community as part of the programme, with 14% doing so for the first time. By designing programme strands around shared, locally relevant heritage, Remember Together created the conditions for communities to connect across ethnicity, age, religion and geography.

Building Confidence and Capacity

Before engaging with Remember Together, 43% of community groups described themselves as confident in delivering a heritage project. After participation, that figure rose to 84%, a near doubling of self-reported confidence. 56% of groups applied for funding support through the programme's micro-funding scheme, with 36% doing so for the first time, building lasting financial governance skills.

Reaching New and Diverse Audiences

41% of participating groups had never taken part in any WW1 commemoration before Remember Together. For specific strands, this figure was even higher: 60% of Unremembered groups and 78% of Tull100 groups were entirely new to commemorative activity. 54% of all participants were aged between 3 and 18, connecting the next generation to this shared history.


Participant Satisfaction

98% of groups rated their experience as positive or very positive. 91% said they would be likely or very likely to take part in a similar heritage project in the future – a powerful indicator of lasting appetite and the quality of the participant experience.

Conclusion

Remember Together demonstrates what is possible when community commemoration is designed around inclusion rather than tradition alone. It engaged nearly a quarter of a million people in active participation, generated press reach exceeding 60 million, and left communities across the UK with stronger networks, greater confidence and a more complete understanding of Britain's shared history.

The programme's legacy lies not only in what was remembered, but in who was invited to remember. By placing the stories of India, the British West Indies, China, women, footballers, mothers, and bell ringers at the heart of national commemoration, Remember Together changed the conversation.



"Reducing social isolation, increasing connections, keeping active and taking notice... It's also led on to community members wanting to do more of this type of thing. Brilliant!"

— Remember Together participant

Remember Together was funded by the Department for Local Communities and Local Government, Big Lottery Fund, the FA, Premier League, English Football League, and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.