

A Centenary Shared

Tracking Public Attitudes to the First
World War Centenary 2013-16

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. A chance to learn	6
3. Is the War of 1914-18 still relevant in 2016?	7
4. What can we learn about the Centenary today?	8
5. Knowledge	10
6. The Human Factor	11
7. Commonwealth Soldiers	13
8. What the Centenary means today	15
9. The Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Jutland	19
10. Where did people encounter the Centenary?	22
11. Conclusion	24
Endnotes	26
Poll Findings and Tables	27

I. Introduction

As we continue to track public attitudes at this halfway point in the Centenary commemorations, our survey finds an enduring public appetite for the Centenary and remembering the First World War. People remain engaged with the Centenary and want to learn more; they feel that the tone of the commemorations so far has been about right; and despite public disagreements about its meaning in the lead-up to the Centenary, most people can agree on what they feel it should be about: a chance to learn, to remember and to focus on reconciliation with former enemies.

Two years into the Centenary, half of the public (51%) still wants to learn more about the First World War before the commemorations conclude in 2018. Only 15% feel that they have learned all they need to know about this defining moment in British history. For many, that reflects not just a personal interest in our history but a desire that it is shared and understood by younger generations. One of the strongest messages coming out of the research is that the Centenary offers a chance for younger Britons to learn more about their country: four-fifths of the public (80%) agrees that the Centenary is a huge opportunity for schools and museums to do more to help children and people of all ages learn more about our nation's history.

Most people (57%) also feel that the war of 1914-18 remains relevant in 2016. The most popular reason why, offered by 74% of respondents, is because of its impact on the society we live in today. Our multi-ethnic, multi-faith society of 2016 looks very different to the Britain of 1914. Yet the army that fought in the First World War looked much more like the Britain of 2016, with soldiers from all over the Commonwealth coming to fight alongside British soldiers. Over three-quarters of the public (77%) believe it is important for integration today that children are taught about this shared multi-ethnic history and the role of Commonwealth soldiers in the First World War.

The tone of Centenary commemorations has thus far met with approval from the public, with a majority (52%) of people feeling it has been 'about right'. Opinions were very similar regarding the tone of commemorations of the centenary of the Battle of the Somme this year, with half scoring it positively and only a small minority (3%) giving the tone of the commemorations a negative rating.

Fears of a 'culture war' over the meaning of the Centenary have not been played out in public. There is declining support for more polarising, politicised interpretations. Less than a quarter of people (23%) agree that the central theme of the First World War commemorations should be that "this was a just war that was important for Britain to fight and win," 10% less than when we asked people in 2014. Nearly twice as many people (42%) disagree with that interpretation, up from 35% in 2014.

Yet despite this, there has been no growth in support for the 'No Glory' anti-commemoration protest of Vanessa Redgrave and Billy Bragg. Only 17% agree with the message that "we should worry about the rush to commemorate the First World War as this may encourage war and nationalism, when this was a futile war of unimaginable slaughter."

More than half the public (53%) disagrees with this message.

In a tumultuous year for British politics and society, more people feel that the Centenary has brought people across Britain together (43%) than feel it has not (32%). Levels of public support and opinion about the Centenary, identified in our findings from 2013 and 2014, have held firm in 2016. As a country are still fascinated by this defining moment in our history, one that we recognise as nationally important but perhaps still understand less than we feel we should. And so above all we see the Centenary as a moment when we, and our children, can learn more about our past - and also how it has shaped the nation to which we all belong today.

About the First World War tracker project

To mark the Centenary of the First World War, British Future and partners the BBC, Imperial War Museum, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have embarked on a longitudinal research project tracking public knowledge and attitudes over the course of the Centenary commemorations. The research builds on the baseline established in the 2013 British Future report '*Do Mention the War: will 1914 matter in 2014?*' and has tracked responses in 2014 and 2016 to key themes, together with a series of *ad hoc* questions about important moments during the Centenary commemorations. A final wave of research will be conducted after the Centenary commemorations conclude in November 2018.

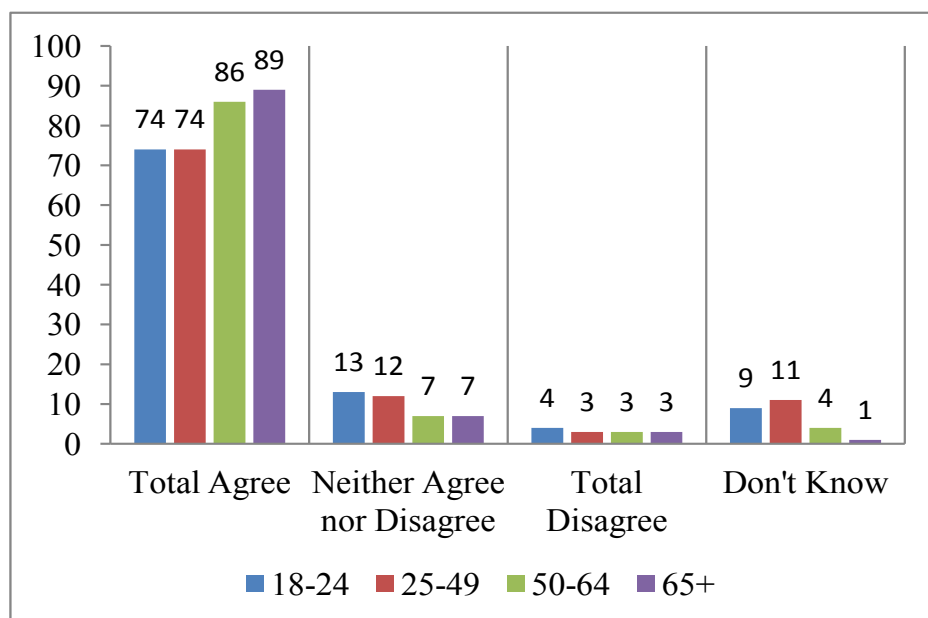
2. A Chance to Learn

The appetite to learn more about the war of 1914-18 during the Centenary period remains strong. A majority of people (51%) hope to learn more about the Centenary before the end of 2018, with just 15% believing they have learnt all they need to know about the First World War. The 2015-16 *Taking Part* survey by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport also finds that 35% of people intend to learn more about the First World War in the future.

Four fifths (80%) of people think it's important that children learn about this history, agreeing with the statement "The Centenary is a huge opportunity for schools and museums to do more to help our kids and people of all ages learn more about our nation's history. There is no point in having a shared history that we forget about." Just 3% disagree. This is felt most strongly by older respondents, with 89% of over-65s agreeing; but even among the youngest 18-24 age group three quarters (74%) feel the same.

Professor Gary Sheffield from the University of Wolverhampton notes: "The Great War Centenary years offer a once-in-a century opportunity for education" and adds "The interest and enthusiasm I have witnessed among local history groups, civic societies, in schools, colleges and universities, and the myriad of exhibitions and publications telling the story of the impact of the First World War on local communities has been truly inspiring."¹

Fig 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement "The Centenary is a huge opportunity for schools and museums to do more to help our kids and people of all ages learn more about our nation's history. There is no point in having a shared history we forget about."



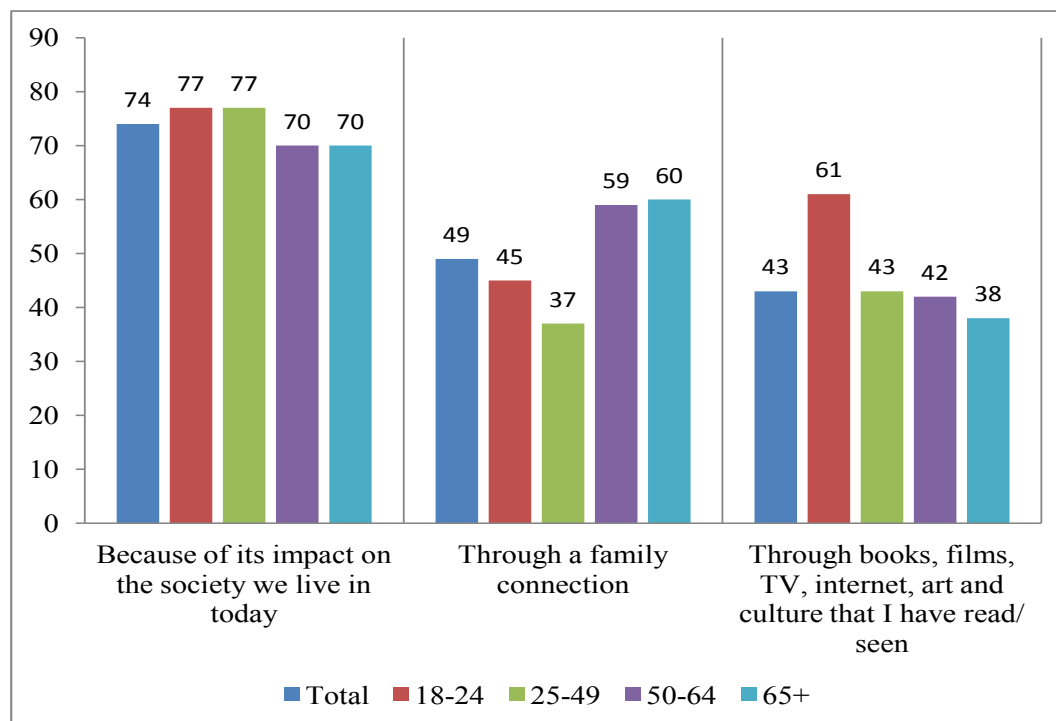
3. Is the War of 1914-18 still relevant in 2016?

At this halfway point in the Centenary commemorations, public interest in the First World War remains undimmed. Over half of the British public (57%) feel it is still relevant today, with only a quarter (26%) believing it has no relevance. The greatest variance comes in regards to age with those above the age of 65 considerably more likely to feel that the First World War is relevant today (65%) than those between the ages of 18 and 24 (43%).

Of those that answered in the affirmative three quarters (74%) stated the First World War had become relevant to them because of its impact on society today. For others, that meaning is more personal: nearly half of respondents (49%) say that the First World War has become relevant due to a family connection.

This sense of a personal or family connection to the war is more prevalent among older respondents, as this generation may have had parents or grandparents fighting in the First World War. They may have had reminiscences passed down to them and hence feel a more direct connection. Younger respondents remain interested but tend to see the First World War as national, rather than family, history, experienced through films, books and culture. For them, it remains relevant because of the way it helped to shape today's Britain.

Fig 2: In which, if any of the following ways has the First World War become relevant to you?



4. What can we learn from the Centenary today?

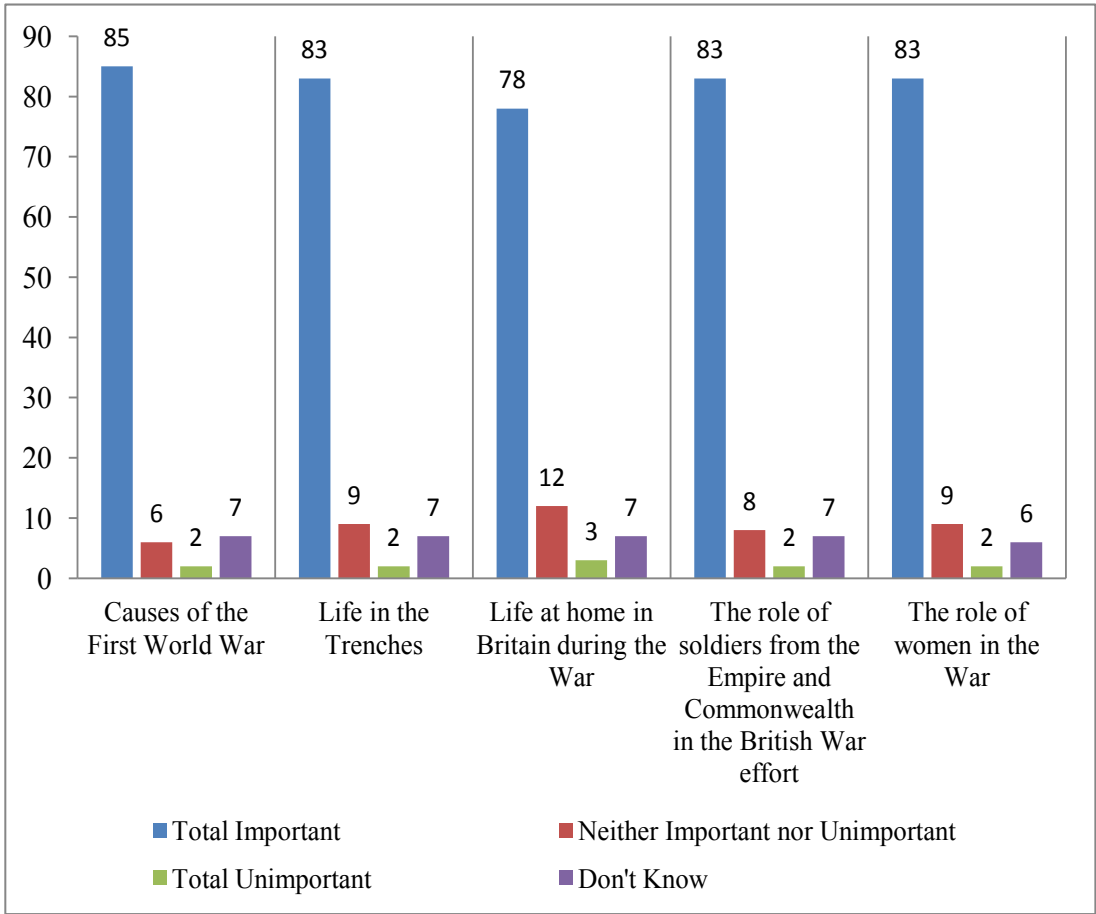
More than three quarters of the British public believe it is important that people know about key elements of the First World War: about the causes of the war (85%); life in the trenches (83%); life in Britain during the war (78%); the role of soldiers from the Commonwealth and the Empire in the British war effort (83%); and the role of women in the war (83%).

Again, older respondents were more likely to attach importance to the sharing of this knowledge, but there was also strong support among the younger generation as well, with two-thirds or more of 18-24s stating that it is important that people know about these aspects of First World War history. No more than 3% considered any of the issues unimportant.



Picture: *A group of female pit brow workers at a Lancashire coal mine in September 1918.* © IWM

Fig 3: For each of the following issues, how important or unimportant do you think it is that people know about them?



5. Knowledge

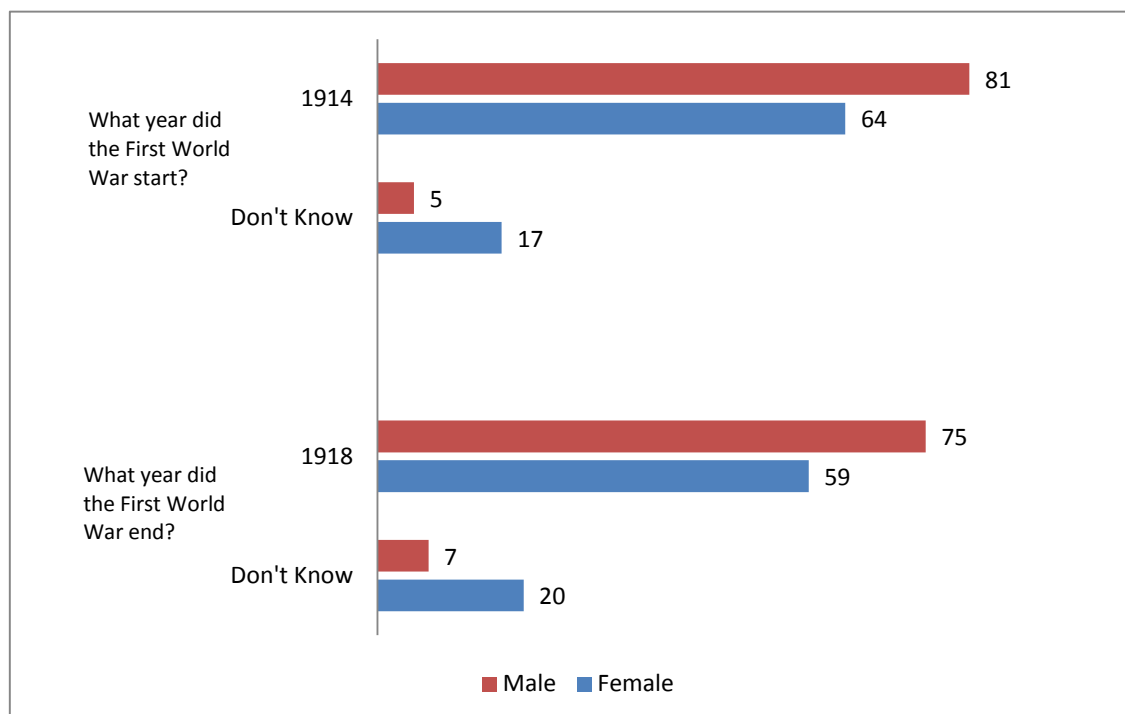
Most of us are aware of at least some of the basic facts about the war and levels of public knowledge have increased over the Centenary period so far. Nearly three quarters of people (72%) identified that the First World War began in 1914, up from 66% in 2013. The findings highlight a difference between men and women with 81% of men able to provide the correct date compared to 64% of women.

Over two-thirds of people (67%) correctly answered that the First World War ended in 1918, down slightly from the start of the centenary but up significantly from the 56% who answered correctly in 2013. The same contrast here exists between men and women, with a 16% difference between men, 75% of whom correctly identified that the First World War ended in 1918 and women, 59% of whom were able to identify the year that the war came to an end.

This gender difference may well be explained by the tendency across all survey questions and issues for women to be more willing to concede that they are unsure of an answer. Women were three times as likely to answer ‘Don’t know’ then men, with 20% telling us they did not know when the First World War ended, compared to 7% of men.

There was also a noticeable difference among age-groups. Those aged 65+ were far more likely to know when the First World War started (87%), compared to 57% for the 18-24 age group; and when the First World War ended (83%), compared to 49% for the younger age group.

Fig 4: Do people know the dates of the First World War?

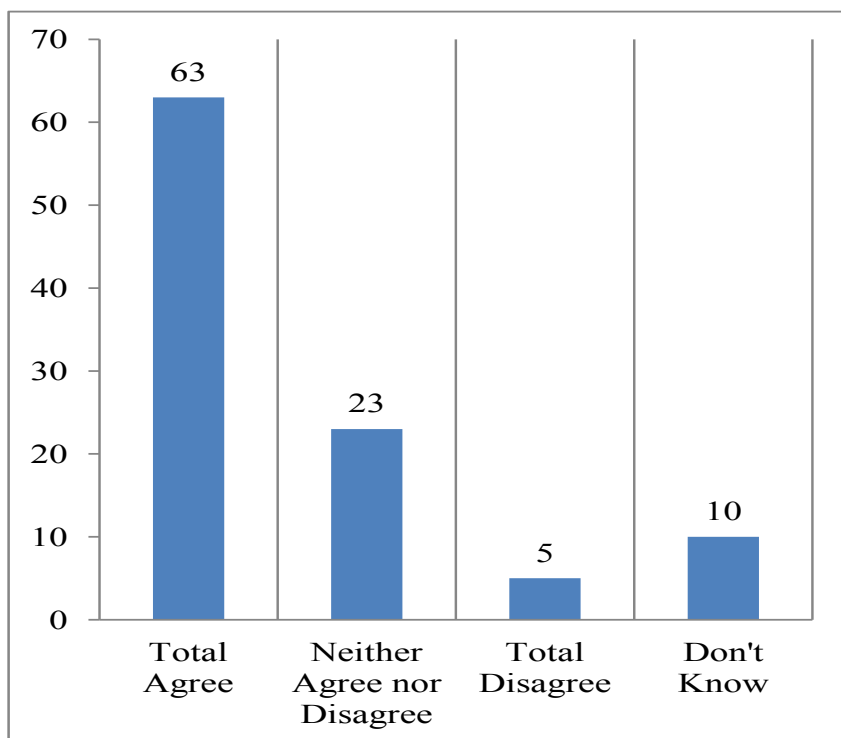


6. The Human Factor

Our research also highlights the public desire to understand more about individuals who were directly involved in the First World War. Three-fifths (63%) agree that “Understanding and reflecting on the lives of those who were involved in the First World War is the most important aspect of remembering the First World War,” with only 5% disagreeing.

For many of us, our understanding of this period in British history has been mediated by books, films and drama that have brought out individual, human stories of the First World War – stories of heroism, of suffering and of loss. There remains a fascination with how the war impacted upon every community and every family in Britain, in a way that more contemporary British conflicts have not.

Fig 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Understanding and reflecting on the lives of those who were involved in the First World War is the most important aspect of remembering the First World War.”





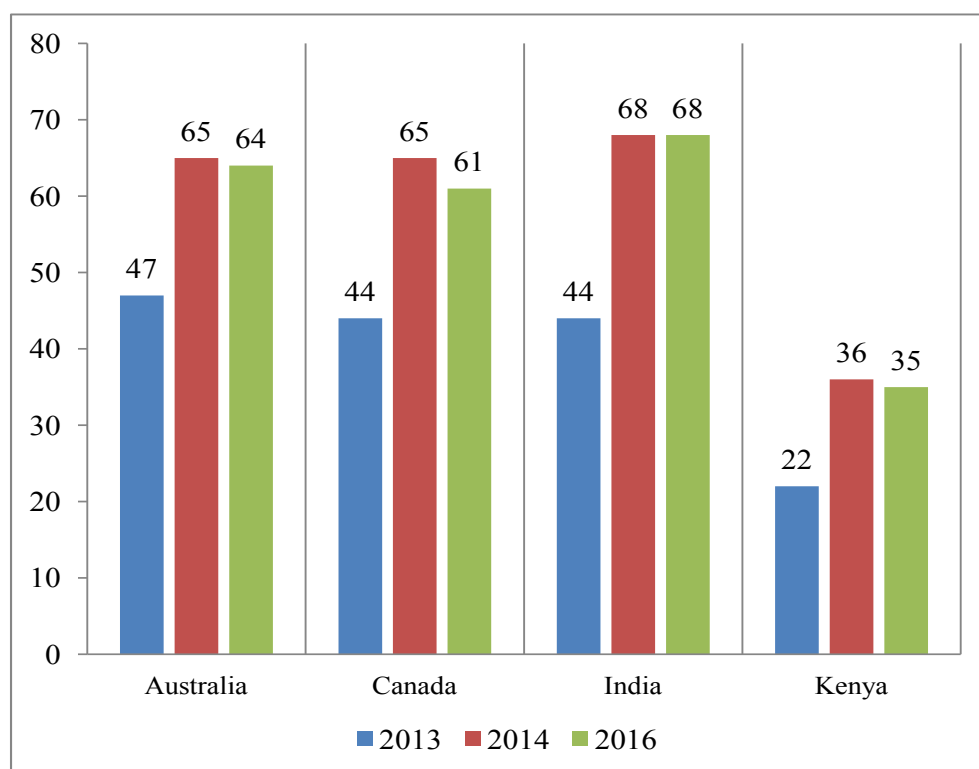
Picture: *The famous still taken from The Battle of the Somme showing a soldier in a trench carrying a wounded man on his back. © IWM*

7. Commonwealth Soldiers

The British War effort was reliant on a large contribution from soldiers from across the Commonwealth. Over 1.5 million soldiers from India, including 400,000 Muslim soldiers from pre-partition India, fought alongside servicemen from Great Britain. They were accompanied by thousands of troops from Australia, Canada, Kenya and other British controlled territories, who participated in active combat during the course of the War.

In 2013, before the start of the Centenary, knowledge of the role of Commonwealth soldiers was confined to a minority. By 2014 most of the public were aware of this contribution, with around two-thirds of people able to identify that more than 1,000 troops came to fight from Australia (65%), Canada (65%) and India (68%).

Fig 6: From which of the following countries do you think more than 1,000 troops came to fight for Britain and her allies during the First World War?



We also found strong agreement that teaching this shared history of commonwealth contribution is of benefit to our modern society today. Three-quarters (77%) of people agree that “The British War Effort included Empire and Commonwealth soldiers from countries including India and the West Indies, Australia and Canada. It is important for integration today that all of our children are taught about this shared multi ethnic history.”

Historian Dr Anna Bostanci writes for the British Council that “the UK has a particular responsibility to construct an inclusive history of the experience of the First World War. It was a truly global conflict, and

involved many Commonwealth countries that made huge sacrifices vital to Britain's war effort."²

The *Unknown & Untold* project by New Horizons in British Islam and British Future has sought to share more widely this history of Muslim soldiers in the First World War. Events in Leicester, Birmingham, Woking and at Sandhurst military training college have engaged Muslim and non-Muslim audiences, young and old, as well as the armed forces leaders of the future. One young Muslim participant from a Birmingham workshop said: "This workshop can help you find your identity because you find out that your family was in the World War."³

Major Naveed Muhammad, who has served in the Royal Corps of Signals for 27 years, told an audience at the *A Very English Islam* event, held at the Muslim burial ground in Woking in September 2016, that "People from minority backgrounds can now rightly stand up and say 'my forefathers did this'."⁴



Picture: *The 20th Deccan Horse, Indian Army, in Carnoy Valley, 7th Divisional Area, 14th July 1916.* © IWM

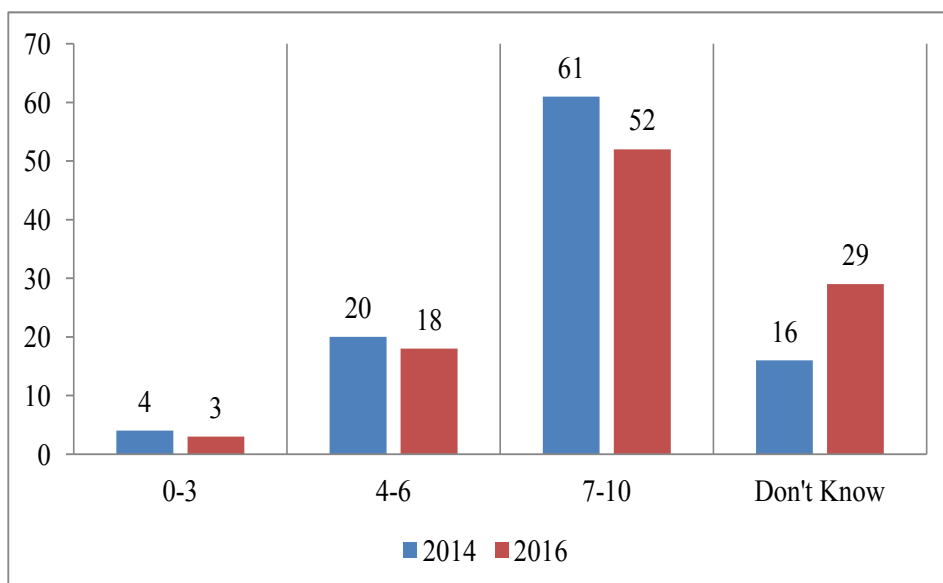
8. What the Centenary means today

Since 2014 we have tracked public attitudes to the tone of the centenary, asking respondents to rate the tone using a 0-10 scale (with 10 reflecting a tone that was ‘completely right’). In 2016, most people (52%) think the tone of the centenary commemorations is about right, scoring it between 7 and 10, compared to just 3% who give a score of 0-3.

While that represents a small drop from 2014, when 61% gave a 7-10 score, that may be accounted for by nearly twice as many answering ‘Don’t know’, reflecting the lower profile of the centenary commemorations in 2016 than at their launch in 2014. This was particularly true of younger respondents, with 42% of 18-24s answering ‘Don’t know’ when asked about the tone of the centenary commemorations.

The DCMS *Taking Part* study (April 2015 to March 2016) finds that 77% of all adults supported the UK commemorating the Centenary of the First World War, reporting that they were slightly or strongly supportive.⁵

Fig 7: On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being “completely wrong” and 10 being “completely right”, how would you rate the tone of the Centenary commemorations to date?



Getting the tone right, on an event of such importance to the public, is important. Dr Andrew Murrison MP, the role of Prime Minister’s Special Representative for the Centenary of the First World War, said in 2014: “We need to make sure that this is done appropriately, that the tone is right and it does not become politically partisan. And I am as happy as I can be that this won’t be a Left-Right issue – I don’t think it is appropriate that it should be.”⁶

Public voices have not always agreed about the tone and meaning of the Centenary. When the commemorations began in 2014 there were some

voices who wished to draw the battle lines in a culture war. Michael Gove, then Education Secretary, started the year by launching an impassioned attack in the *Daily Mail* on left-wing academics whom he believed were guilty of peddling myths about the War and incorrectly questioning its validity and meaning. “Our understanding of the war,” he wrote, “Has been overlaid by misunderstandings and misrepresentations which reflect an, at best, ambiguous attitude to this country and, at worst, an unhappy compulsion on the part of some to denigrate virtues such as patriotism, honour and courage. The conflict has, for many, been seen through the fictional prism of dramas such as *Oh! What a Lovely War*, *The Monocled Mutineer* and *Blackadder*, as a misbegotten shambles – a series of catastrophic mistakes perpetrated by an out-of-touch elite. Even to this day there are Left-wing academics all too happy to feed those myths.”⁷

This prompted a reaction from historian and then Shadow Education Secretary Tristram Hunt, who accused Gove of using history to score political points, writing: “Contrary to the assertions of Michael Gove and the *Daily Mail*, the left needs no lessons on the virtues of patriotism, honour and courage”⁸ Hunt sought to defend different interpretations of the War, adding: “Whether you agree or disagree, given the deaths of 15 million people during the war, attempting to position 1918 as a simplistic, nationalistic triumph seems equally foolhardy, not least because the very same tensions re-emerged to such deadly effect in 1939.”

Neither view closely reflects those of the public, who tend to reject more polarising interpretations of the Centenary commemorations.

Only 23% agree with the statement “Instead of focusing on the pity of War and loss of life, the central theme of the First World War commemoration should be that this was a just war that was important to Britain to fight and win,” a drop of 10% from when the question was asked in 2014. Four in ten people (42%) now disagree with that interpretation, up 7% from 2014. That could be because 2016 has seen an increased focus on the Battle of Somme and the colossal scale of deaths and injuries in the trenches 100 years ago in 1916; it could equally be because a victorious tone has *not* been adopted in the commemorations to date, and the public has found agreement with this more measured tone.

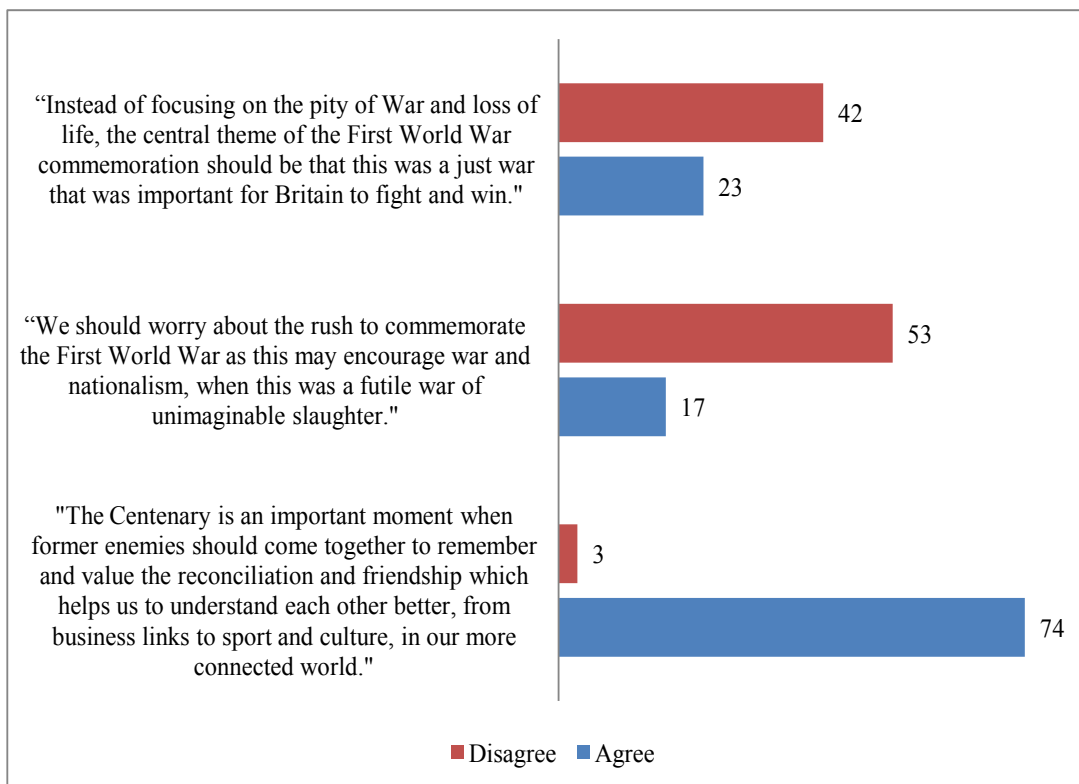
While there remains little public appetite for the centenary becoming a celebration of national victory, the same is true of counter-voices in the media who warn against commemorating the centenary at all. The statement “We should worry about the rush to commemorate the First World War as this may encourage war and nationalism, when this was a futile war of unimaginable slaughter,” finds agreement from only 17% of the public, while 53% say they disagree with it.

So the public rejects these more politicised interpretations of the centenary. Instead, they would prefer a focus on learning and on reconciliation: three-quarters (74%) agree that ‘The centenary of the Great War is an important moment when former enemies should come together to remember – and value the reconciliation and friendship which helps us to understand each other better, from business links to

sport and culture, in our more connected world.’

Dr Heather Jones, Associate Professor in International History at LSE and an expert in First World War studies, sums up that “the reality is that there is no simple, clear-cut historical narrative of the First World War as either patriotic and just or imperialist and coercive. It was all these things simultaneously.”⁹ Renowned Scottish military historian, Professor Sir Hew Strachan adds “If we cannot admit competing and sometimes contradictory interpretations of the war, then its commemoration is unlikely to deepen our understanding.”¹⁰

Figure 8: *How should we mark the Centenary? (2016)*



A Centenary shared across the referendum divide

Our research also asked people which way they had voted in the EU referendum, held just a month before this polling was conducted, allowing us to track attitudes to the Centenary among Leave and Remain supporters. Though the referendum divided public and political opinion across Britain over the future of our relationships with the EU, we found a broad consensus on attitudes to the Centenary commemorations, including their importance as a symbol of reconciliation within Europe.

Both Leave and Remain voters feel that the tone of the Centenary has been about right, particularly Leave voters, with 58% of Leave and 50% of Remain supporters giving the commemorations an approval rating of 7-10 out of ten, and only a small proportion (Leave 1% / Remain 4%) rating it negatively 0-3.

People with differing views on Britain's relationship with the EU agree that the Centenary offers a chance to learn more about our history (Leave 84% / Remain 86%); and that they would like to learn more over the next two years until 2018 (Leave 53% / Remain 53%).

Whichever way we voted on 23 June, most of us feel that the meaning of the Centenary should be about reconciliation. 76% of Leave voters and 83% of Remainers agree that the centenary is “an important moment when former enemies should come together to remember – and value the reconciliation and friendship which helps us to understand each other better, from business links to sport and culture, in our more connected world.”

They reject the more politicised interpretations of the Centenary. Here there is some difference, however between supporters of the different referendum campaigns with Leave voters less certain in their rejection of the message that ‘this was a just war that was right for Britain to fight and win’ (agree 33%, disagree 35%, neither/don’t know 33%) than Remain voters (agree 19%, disagree 53%, neither/don’t know 28%). Both, however reject the ‘No Glory’ message that we should not rush to commemorate the First World War as it may encourage nationalism (Leave agree 13%, disagree 60%; Remain agree 18%, disagree 55%).

More people on both sides of the referendum feel that the Centenary has brought people across Britain together (Leave 50% / Remain 41%) than feel it has not done so (Leave 23% / Remain 21%).

9. The Battle of the Somme and The Battle of Jutland

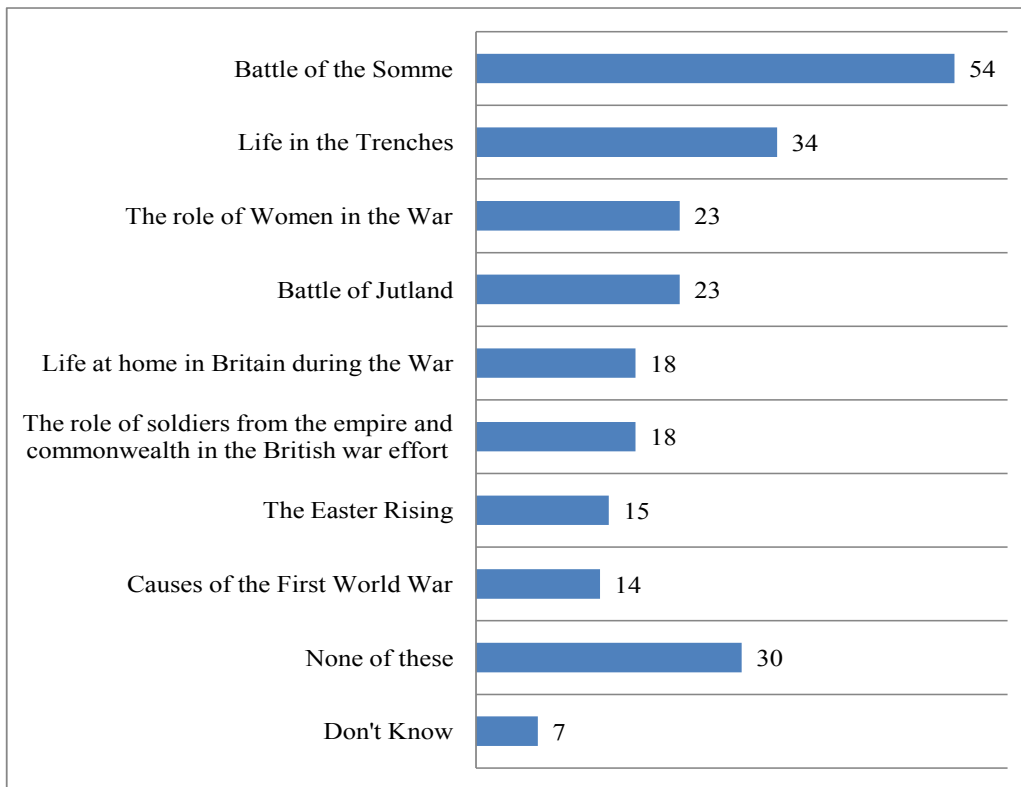
The Somme centenary was the principle public moment of 2016's First World War commemorations. It drew attention through well-publicised official events involving European leaders and the Royal Family and moving cultural commemorations, including Jeremy Deller's #WeAreHere, which saw actors in WW1 battle dress silently mingling with commuters and shoppers across the country. Most people (54%) say that they saw or heard information about the Somme in the month of our survey – considerably more than had encountered other Centenary themes. Older respondents were considerably more likely than younger people to have encountered information about the Somme, with three-quarters (77%) of over-65s recalling that they had done so, compared to 36% of 18-24 year olds.

Most people feel at least broadly aware of the facts of the Battle of the Somme: 42% of the public feel that they understand it very well, compared to 18% who say they have heard very little about it.



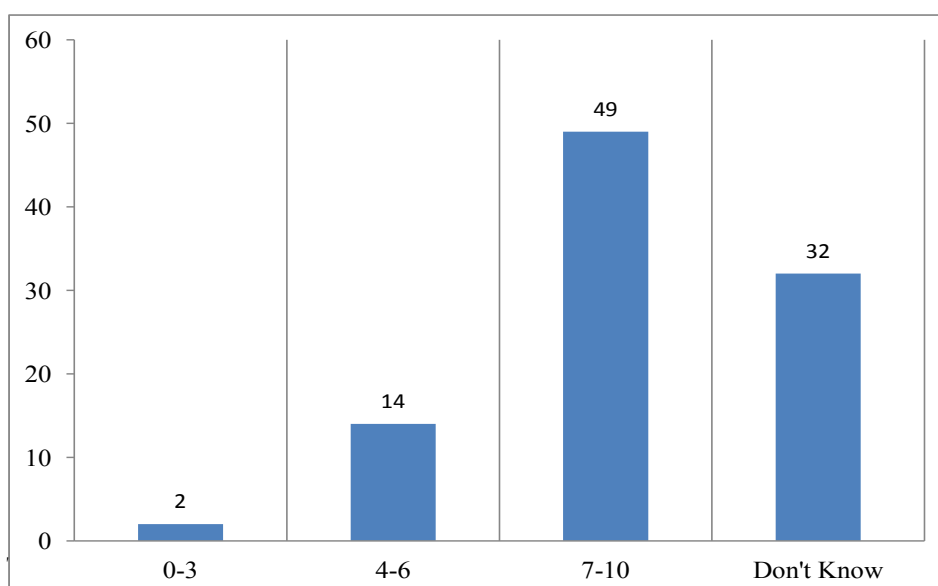
Picture: *Image by Phil Rogers, Flickr*

Fig 9: Have you seen or heard information including on TV or in a newspaper, or at an event about any of these issues in the past month?



There was broad approval of the tone of the Battle of the Somme commemoration, with half (49%) of respondents scoring the tone between 7 and 10 compared to just 2% who gave a more negative score 0-3 – though a third of people felt they could not make a judgement and answered ‘Don’t know’.

Fig 10: Thinking specifically about the Centenary Commemoration of the Battle of the Somme, how would you rate the tone of the Centenary Commemorations?



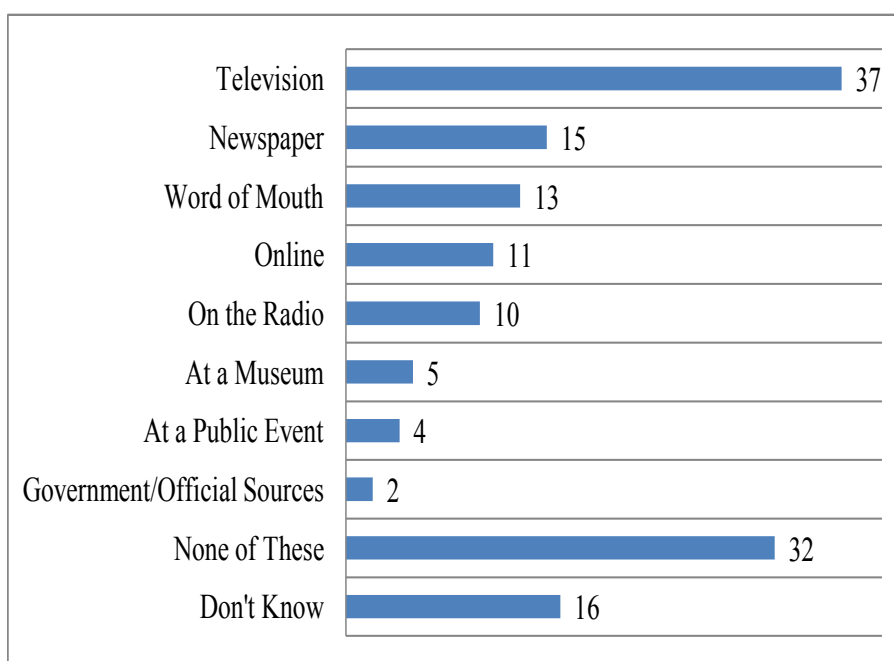
less well known. Jutland was the largest naval battle of the First World War and the only full-scale clash of British and German battleships, lasting from 31st May to 1st June 1916. Both sides claimed victory at the time, with both losing many ships and men in the North Sea battle.

Our research finds that efforts to make the Jutland centenary one of 2016's key moments were less successful. Only 5% of the public report having seen anything about the Battle of Jutland at a public event and less than a quarter (23%) say they had heard anything at all about the Battle, via any medium. One quarter of the public gaining some awareness of Jutland may, nevertheless, represent quite an advance in understanding - but only 15% believe they understand Jutland well, with three times as many people (44%) having either never heard of it or heard little about it. While a third of people believed that the Battle of Jutland had received too little publicity in the print media (32%), from the Government (35%) and in broadcast media (34%), it may be that it simply proved too much of an uphill struggle to show the public that the First World War was fought at sea as well as on land.

10. Where did people encounter the Centenary?

More than a third of people (37%) had seen information about the First World War Centenary on television in the month of our survey, including a majority (51%) of the over 65 age group. 15% had seen coverage in a newspaper and 13% had heard through word of mouth. 11% had encountered the Centenary online and 10% had heard information on the radio.

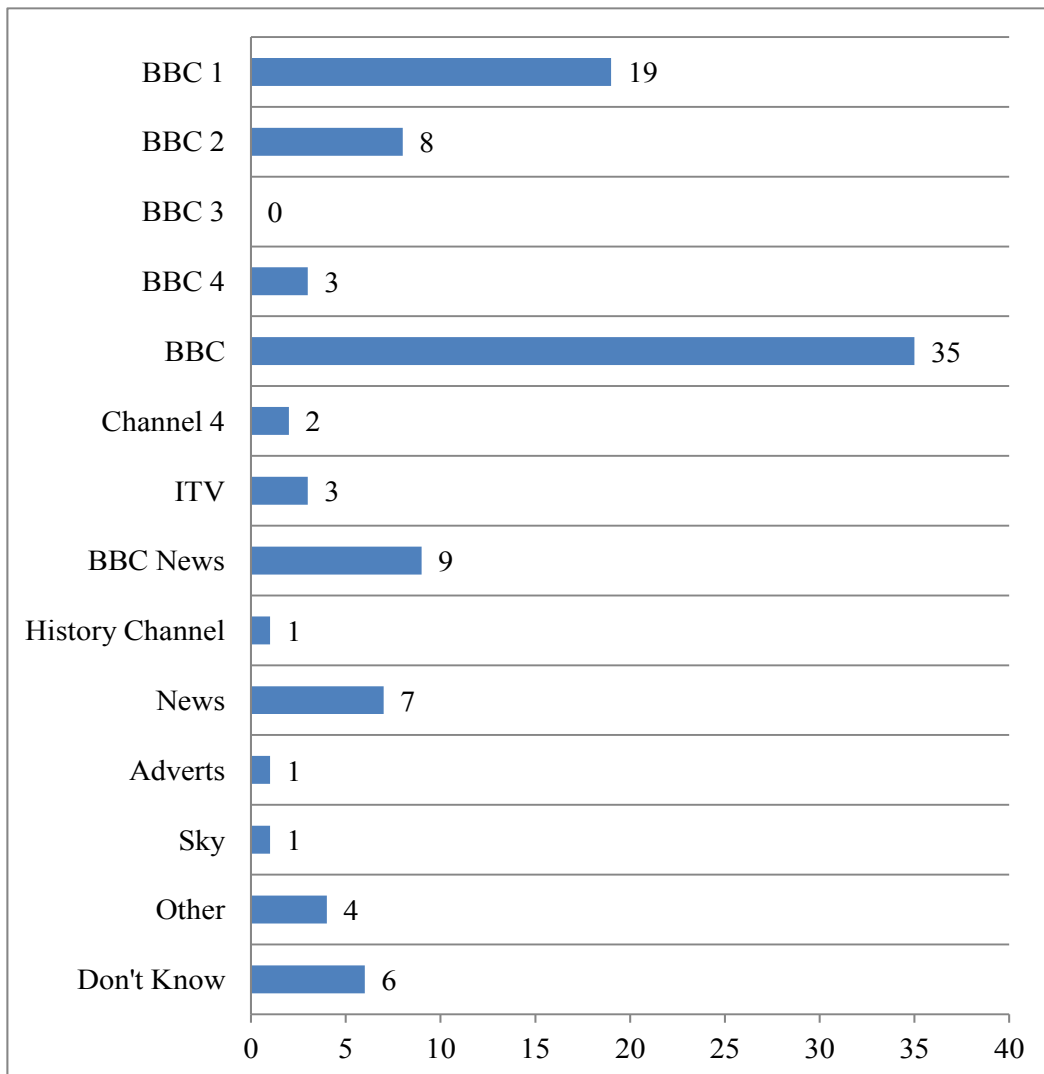
Fig 11: *In the last month, where have you seen information about the Centenary of the First World War?*



Of those that had seen television coverage, the most widely-cited source of information about the Centenary, the BBC was by far the most likely outlet, with ten times more people saying they had seen coverage on the BBC than from another broadcaster.

This was also true for those who discovered information online and those who heard about the Centenary on the radio. Nearly a third (32%) of those who saw information online said the BBC was their source of information and over half who heard something on the radio either heard through BBC Radio 4 (47%) or BBC Radio 2 (21%).

Fig 12: In the last month, where have you seen information about the Centenary of the First World War? Television.



Those who had read about the Centenary in a newspaper were more likely to have done so in the Daily Mail (32%), more than double its nearest challengers, The Telegraph and The Times (14%). There was also an age split in these findings with 30% of over 65s having seen information about the Centenary in a newspaper compared to just 4% of the 18-24 age group.

Many others will encounter the centenary through events in their local area. The 2015/16 *Taking Part* survey from DCMS finds that 55% of adults stated they were aware of local or national events or activities being held in the UK between 2014 and 2018 to commemorate the First World War.

I I. Conclusion: Could the centenary bring Britain together?

Our tracker research shows a British public that remains, two years into the Centenary period, engaged with the First World War Centenary commemorations and eager to learn more about this pivotal moment in our history. We found a shared sense that the First World War matters to the public, that it remains relevant to us today and that it has helped to shape the society we have become. The public appears to be broadly happy with how this national moment has been handled so far.

Remembrance Day 2018 will provide a particularly poignant opportunity for people to come together in joint remembrance of the sacrifice made by those who fought in the First World War.

Expectations for those commemorations in 2018 will be high. *Blood swept lands and seas of red*, the installation of 888,246 ceramic poppies at the Tower of London, must rank as one of the most popular public art projects of recent times, providing a powerful visual memory that will persist for many years to come and drawing visitors from across the country. Many people also took part in the 'Lights Out' moment organised to mark Britain's entry into the First World War, inspired by the words of wartime foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey, "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our life-time."¹¹



Picture: *Blood swept lands and seas of red* at the Tower of London, 2014

Challenges and opportunities will persist as we approach the Centenary's conclusion in 2018. Some voices may see the marking of

100 years since the conclusion of the war as an opportunity to place a more nationalistic focus on British victory. That could, in turn, provoke a polarised response from opponents keener to downplay the centenary's end, emphasising the futile loss of life and a 'No Glory' message.

That opportunity to bring people together in a shared national moment will be significantly magnified in 2018 – not just by the historical context, marking a century since the First World War finally came to an end, but by the the modern-day political context too.

It is obviously a coincidence that the centenaries of the key moments of the First World War have happened to fall very close to some of the most dramatic public events of our own times. The August 2014 centenary of the outbreak of the conflict came as Scotland was deciding whether to remain part of the UK or to go its own way; and the Somme 2016 anniversary fell just a week after perhaps Britain's biggest public decision for half a century. That means the November 2018 armistice (and Jan 2019 Treaty) centenaries will fall during the decisive moments of the negotiations with Europe ahead of our departure from the EU.

When there are big themes of identity and politics in play, one might expect the Centenary to get caught up in them, given its prominence and symbolic power. But to date, it has not played out like that and our research has found little support for more politicised interpretations of the centenary's meaning.

This could be because the growing public appetite to understand our history is something shared and valued across every side of the big choices we face today. History offers a positive opportunity to debate and argue over its contemporary meanings. But if this may appear as an age of political polarisation, attitudes towards why the Centenary matters appear solid and stable. There has been a further gradual shift away from more contested and polarising arguments - whether from right or left - and towards a consensus which encompasses both tradition and diversity.

The social, public and political context has shifted between 2014 and 2018 but there remains a broad public appetite to separate the value of remembering our history from contemporary political debates. That may well now be stronger as we head towards the conclusion of the Centenary in 2018. It may even be an opportunity: in 2016, 43% of people feel that the centenary has brought people across Britain together, compared to 32% who feel that it has not. Those may be figures that we might look to improve on over the next two years.

Just as the First World War itself affected people across Britain indiscriminately, claiming the lives of people rich and poor, from the cities and the shires and in all four corners of Britain, so will our shared Remembrance 100 years later. *The Last Post* will be played in towns and cities that voted to stay in the EU and those that chose Brexit; and voters for both Leave and Remain will stand side by side, wearing the same Remembrance Poppies as they remember the fallen.

Endnotes

1. Sheffield, G (2014), “A Once in a Century Opportunity? Some Personal Reflections on the Centenary of the First World War”(http://www.voicesofwarandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Personal-Reflections-by-Gary-Sheffield.pdf)
2. See <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-was-india-involved-first-world-war>
3. See <http://ww1muslimsoldiers.org.uk/inspiring-youth/>
4. See <http://ww1muslimsoldiers.org.uk/commemoration/>
5. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sat--2>
6. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10597228/Left-Right-Left-Right.-Halt-Call-to-keep-politics-out-of-WW1-anniversary.html>
7. See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2532923/Michael-Gove-blasts-Blackadder-myths-First-World-War-spread-television-sit-coms-left-wing-academics.html>
8. See <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/04/first-world-war-michael-gove-left-bashing-history>
9. See <http://www.ippr.org/juncture/memory-and-meaning-in-the-commemoration-of-the-first-world-war>
10. See <http://www.historyextra.com/blog/first-world-war/why-we-should-celebrate-first-world-war-well-commemorate-it>
11. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28149786>

Poll Findings and Tables

For this 2016 tracker, YouGov asked 2,029 GB adults between 22-26 July about their knowledge and attitudes to the First World War centenary. Quoted 2014 figures are from YouGov polling conducted at the end of August 2014. All figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). Quoted 2013 figures come from YouGov polling of 1,955 adults on 9th and 10th July 2013.

Taking Part is a household survey in England. It looks at participation in the cultural and sport sectors. Running since 2005, the survey was commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in partnership with Arts Council England, Historic England, and Sport England. These statistics are used widely by policy officials, practitioners, academics, the private sector and charities to measure and understand participation in the cultural sectors. *Taking Part* is the key evidence base for DCMS, providing reliable national estimates of participation and supporting the Department's aim of enriching lives by providing people with the chance to get involved in a variety of cultural and sporting opportunities.

What year did the First World War start?

	Total	Men	Women	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
1914	72	81	64	57	65	80	87
Another Year	17	14	19	28	18	14	10
Don't Know	11	5	17	15	17	6	3

What year did the First World War end?

	Total	Men	Women	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
1918	67	75	59	49	59	76	83
Another Year	19	18	21	34	20	16	13
Don't Know	14	7	20	17	21	8	4

Which of the following two statements comes closest to your view?

I am hoping to learn more during the rest of the Centenary between now and 2018	51
I feel that I have learned all I need to know about the First World War	15
Neither	26
Don't Know	8

Do you feel that the First World War is relevant to you?

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Yes, I do	57	43	54	61	65
No, I don't	26	34	24	27	25
Don't Know	17	23	22	12	10

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The Centenary is a huge opportunity for schools and museums to do more to help our kids and people of all ages learn more about our nation’s history. There is no point in having a shared history that we forget about.”

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Agree	80	74	74	86	89
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10	13	12	7	7
Total Disagree	3	4	3	3	3
Don’t Know	7	9	11	4	1

In which, if any, of the following ways has the First World War become relevant to you?

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
Because of its impact on the society we live in today	74	77	77	70	70
Through a family connection	49	45	37	59	60
Through books, films, TV, internet, art and culture that I have read/seen	43	61	43	42	38
Because of where I live	10	21	11	9	8
Other	7	11	8	7	5
None of these	2	3	3	0	1
Don’t Know	1	2	1	1	0

From which of the following countries do you think more than 1,000 troops came to fight for Britain and her allies during the First World War?

	2013	2014	2016
Australia	47	65	64
Canada	44	65	61
India	44	68	68
Kenya	22	36	35

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The British war effort included Empire and Commonwealth Soldiers from countries including India and the West Indies, Australia and Canada. It is important for integration today that all of our children are taught about the shared history of a multi-ethnic Britain?”

	Total	18-24	25 - 49	50 - 64	65+
Total Agree	77	70	71	84	87
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12	15	14	9	10
Total Disagree	3	1	3	3	2
Don't Know	8	14	12	4	2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Understanding and reflecting on the lives of those who were involved in the First World War is the most important aspect of remembering the First World War”

Total Agree	63
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23
Total Disagree	5
Don't Know	10

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“We should worry about the rush to commemorate the First World War as this may encourage war and nationalism, when this was a futile war of unimaginable slaughter.”

	2014	2016
Total Agree	19	17
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21	19
Total Disagree	51	53
Don't Know	8	12

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Instead of focusing on the pity of war and the loss of life, the central theme of the First World War commemoration should be that this was a just war that was important to Britain to fight and win.”

	2014	2016
Total Agree	33	23
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24	24
Total Disagree	35	42
Don't Know	8	11

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The centenary of the Great War is an important moment when former enemies should come together to remember - and value the reconciliation and friendship which helps us to understand each other better, from business links to sport and culture, in our more connected world.”

	2014	2016
Total Agree	77	74
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	14
Total Disagree	3	3
Don't Know	7	9

For each of the following issues, how important or unimportant do you think it is that people know about them?

Causes of the War

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Important	85	84	79	89	91
Neither Important nor Unimportant	6	6	8	4	4
Total Unimportant	2	2	2	2	3
Don't Know	7	8	10	5	2

Life in the Trenches

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Important	83	77	77	86	92
Neither Important nor Unimportant	9	11	11	8	4
Total Unimportant	2	4	2	2	3
Don't Know	7	8	10	4	2

Life at home in Britain during the war

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Important	78	66	73	84	88
Neither Important nor Unimportant	12	20	13	10	7
Total Unimportant	3	5	4	2	3
Don't Know	7	9	9	4	2

The role of soldiers from the Empire and Commonwealth in the British war effort

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Important	83	81	77	87	93
Neither Important nor Unimportant	8	8	11	7	4
Total Unimportant	2	2	2	2	2
Don't Know	7	9	10	5	2

The role of women in the war

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Total Important	83	75	78	86	91
Neither Important nor Unimportant	9	14	10	8	5
Total Unimportant	2	3	3	2	2
Don't Know	6	8	9	4	2

Do you think commemorating the First World War Centenary has, or has not, helped to bring people in Britain together?

Commemorating the First World War HAS helped to bring people in Britain together	43
Commemorating the First World War HAS NOT helped to bring people in Britain together	32
Don't Know	25

On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being “completely wrong” and 10 being “completely right”, how would you rate the tone of the centenary commemorations to date?

	0-3	4-6	7-10	Don't Know
2014	4	20	61	16
2016	3	18	52	29

Thinking specifically about the centenary commemoration of the Battle of the Somme, how would you rate the tone of the centenary commemorations?

0-3	4-6	7-10	Don't Know
2	14	49	32

Thinking specifically about the centenary commemoration of the Battle of Jutland, how would you rate the tone of the centenary commemorations?

0-3	4-6	7-10	Don't Know
3	17	26	54

Thinking specifically about the commemoration of the Battle of Jutland, do you think the amount of publicity this received has been too much, too little or about the right amount?

	Too Much	Too Little	About Right	Don't Know
From the Government	1	35	15	38
In print media	1	32	18	49
In broadcast media	2	34	21	43

Listed below are events that took place during the First World War. How would you rate your understanding of each of them? (0 = not heard of it, 10 = understand very well)

Battle of the Somme

0-3	4-6	7-10	Don't Know
18	31	42	10

Battle of Jutland

0-3	4-6	7-10	Don't Know
44	32	15	12

Have you seen any information about either of the following at a public event?

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Battle of the Somme	55	36	68	44	63
Battle of Jutland	5	0	0	3	10

Have you seen or heard information including on TV or in a newspaper, or at an event about any of these issues in the past month?

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +
Battle of the Somme	54	36	42	64	77
Life in the trenches	34	21	22	43	58
The role of women in the war	23	14	14	28	39
The Battle of Jutland	23	9	14	32	37
Life at home in Britain during the War	18	13	10	21	34
The role of soldiers from the empire and the commonwealth in the British War effort	18	12	9	23	32
The Easter Rising	15	8	9	21	23
Causes of World War 1	14	14	10	15	22
None of these	30	41	39	23	15
Don't Know	7	9	11	4	2

In the last month where have you seen information about the centenary of the First World War?

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
TV	37	23	28	47	51
Newspaper	15	4	7	20	30
Word of Mouth	13	16	9	17	14
Online	11	9	11	12	8
Radio	10	3	9	15	13
At a Museum	5	2	4	5	6
At a public event	4	4	2	6	7
Government/ Official Sources	2	1	2	3	1
Don't Know	16	12	18	12	18
None of These	32	46	40	26	16

In the last month, where have you seen information about the Centenary of the First World War?

Television

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
BBC 1	19	23	18	16	22
BBC 2	8	6	7	7	10
BBC 3	0	0	0	0	0
BBC 4	3	4	1	5	3
BBC	35	47	34	30	40
Channel 4	2	0	2	2	1
ITV	3	0	3	4	2
BBC News	9	8	15	8	5
History Channel	1	0	0	3	0
News	7	3	10	8	5
Adverts	1	0	2	0	0
Sky	1	2	2	1	1
Others	4	3	4	6	2
Don't Know	6	4	3	10	7

In the last month, where have you seen information about the centenary of the First World War?

Newspaper

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
Daily Mail	32	0	21	32	39
Telegraph	14	0	15	17	14
Times	14	11	17	11	16
Guardian	11	37	17	13	5
Local	7	14	6	9	5
Express	4	0	3	5	5
Mirror	4	0	1	5	6
Sun	3	0	0	4	5
i	3	24	2	2	2
Metro	2	0	9	1	0
Star	1	0	2	0	1
Evening Standard	1	14	2	1	0
FT	0	0	0	1	0
Other	0	0	1	0	0
Don't Know	2	0	4	0	3

In the last month, where have you seen information about the centenary of the First World War?

Online

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
BBC	32	40	32	33	23
Facebook	19	8	21	22	17
News Websites	7	8	11	3	2
Wiki	4	0	4	4	6
Mail	3	0	1	2	12
Google	3	0	4	3	2
Guardian	3	11	2	4	0
YouTube	3	0	4	3	3
Social Media	3	5	6	0	0
Twitter	3	5	5	0	2
Ancestry	2	0	0	5	4
National Archives	1	0	1	2	0
Others	13	23	8	12	25
Don't Know	3	0	1	7	4

In the last month, where have you seen information about the centenary of the First World War?

Radio

	Total	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+
BBC Radio 4	47	83	42	48	50
BBC Radio 2	21	0	26	24	12
Local Stations	7	0	1	11	13
BBC	7	0	13	4	5
BBC Radio 5	2	0	4	2	0
5 Live	2	0	3	1	3
BBC Radio 1	1	0	1	0	0
Jeremy Vine	1	0	0	3	1
Woman's Hour	1	0	1	1	0
Other	8	17	8	6	7
Don't Know	3	0	1	1	8

About British Future and the First World War Tracker

This report is authored by British Future with support from partners the Imperial War Museum, BBC, Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars. It also holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive. The Commission operates in more than 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries. <http://www.cwgc.org>.



IWM is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of over 3000 national and international members. Together, we will present a vibrant global programme of events, activities and digital platforms which will enable millions of people across the world to discover more about life in the First World War. Together, through the Programme, we are creating a lasting legacy connecting current and future generations with the lives, stories and impact of the First World War. www.1914.org.



British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank engaging people's hopes and fears about integration and migration, opportunity and identity, so that we share a confident and welcoming Britain, inclusive and fair to all.

British Future's report *Do Mention The War - Will 1914 matter in 2014?* established a baseline on public attitudes ahead of the Centenary, and can be read online at www.britishfuture.org.

Together with New Horizons in British Islam, British Future is coordinating the *Unknown and Untold* project which seeks to raise public awareness of the contribution made by Muslim soldiers to the British Army in the First World War. Further information and online resources can be found at ww1muslimsoldiers.org.uk.

British Future...

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank

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