



Press Release: For Immediate release

Europeana 1914-18 World War One Family History Roadshow

Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, OX16 2PQ
3 November, 2012 10.00am – 4.30pm

Bring us your WW1 letters, photos, diaries or recordings

Do you have a box hidden deep in the attic or under the bed that holds your great grandfather's diaries from 1914-1918? His army medals? Or a photo with a special story behind it? If so, it could be part of a unique European WW1 project, shared worldwide to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the war.

Oxford University, the British Library and JISC have joined forces with Europeana - Europe's digital museum, library and archive - and local institutions including the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and Banbury Museum, to gather and tell personal stories from 1914-1918. These valuable stories will then take their place in the ever-growing online European archive of family memorabilia from WW1. And we need people's help.

Families are urged to bring photographs, letters, diaries, film or audio recordings, together with the stories of who they belonged to and why they are important to their families to the Europeana 1914-1918 Family History Roadshow at Banbury Museum on 3 November.





Historians and experts from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, the Western Front Association and Oxford Museum Services will be on hand to talk about the significance of finds, while staff from Oxford University IT Services and the British Library will professionally digitise the objects and upload them to the dedicated europeana1914-1918.eu website on the spot.

Roadshows like this one are being held across Europe as the centenary approaches. Each individual story - that otherwise might never be told outside of the family - is essential to creating a unique European archive and perspective of World War One. Through this archive, stories from countries across Europe will be shared online, accessed by others worldwide and saved for future generations.

And if people can't get to the event in Banbury, the Europeana 1914-1918 website gives advice on how to scan, photograph and upload material at home. europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributor

Digitisation saves precious memorabilia from being lost or thrown away - and it keeps them safe for future use by schools, genealogists, cultural organisations and historians.

Jill Cousins, Europeana's executive director, said:

'Memorabilia and stories are kept by families. They are hidden archives containing very personal stories of great historical significance.

'That's why our online archive, which is collecting material from across Europe in a series of roadshows, is so important. Europeana brings a new approach to cultural history, linking people's own stories to the official histories and showing the many-sided views of the same slice of history.

'We want to encourage people to create their collective memory of a war that affected the everyday lives of virtually all Europeans, no matter which side they were on.'

Oxford University, the creators of the original idea for these WW1 collection days, is providing professional expertise to Europeana 1914-1918.

Director of Oxford University IT Services, Dr Stuart Lee, said:

'The European project has successfully unearthed hidden treasures held by members of the public that add further to our knowledge of the war, demonstrating how the new technologies can release such resources and engage the public in University research. We hope that Banbury will allow us to explore in depth the effect on one area of the country.'

Cherwell District Council's deputy leader, Cllr George Reynolds said:

'Banbury Museum is proud to host this event. With the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One fast approaching it is appropriate to look back at what it meant to the population of this area. This will be a fascinating day at the museum and I look forward to finding out what this project will unearth,



especially as several of my uncles fought in the war. It will shed light on the historical record and the personal impact of the conflict.'

Stephen Barker, Learning and Participation Manager of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock, said:

'I hope that local people from across the county and beyond will feel inspired to participate by bringing letters, postcards, medals and documents related to the 1914-1918 war to this national event. Their objects will tell us about a time passing from living memory, the story of the lives of Oxfordshire men, women and children in wartime. Above all we want to listen to their accounts and to the stories behind the objects. Some people will know much about what they have, whilst others may want to know more about these precious family possessions.'

Family History Roadshow, 3 November, 2012 10.00am – 4.30pm

Banbury Museum
Spiceball Park Road
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 2PQ

01295 753752

- Ends -

Contact:

For further information or images please contact Pandora George at Bullet PR
pandora@bulletpr.co.uk
01273 775520

Eleanor.Kenny@bl.uk
+44 207 412 7113

Notes for editors

Europeana

Europeana europeana.eu is Europe's digital library, archive and museum.

The Europeana 1914-1918 project europeana1914-1918.eu, set up with Oxford University IT Services, will provide unique new resources for education, exhibitions,



applications and services that are created to support remembrance of World War One and its effect on people's lives.

Many local libraries and museums do the work of organising and running the roadshows; Banbury Museum and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust are key local partners in organising the Banbury roadshow.

To date, 15 roadshows have taken place across Germany, the UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Denmark. In the run-up to the WW1 centenary, Europeana is working with partners in Belgium, Italy, France, Switzerland, Romania, Poland and Austria. So far, 2,000 people of all ages from across Europe have attended the roadshows to share family stories.

Roadshow participants have been joined by online contributors and 45,000 photos of objects related to WW1 have been uploaded to the Europeana 1914-1918 website. All material collected by the project is channelled into Europeana. These family stories complement the national narratives being digitised by national and state libraries for the centenary as part of Europeana Collections 1914-1918.

Oxford University IT Services

Oxford University began the WW1 family history initiative when it asked people across Britain to bring letters, photographs and keepsakes from the war to be digitised in 2006. This pilot project was funded by JISC, the UK educational technology innovator. Its success encouraged Europeana to approach Oxford to form a partnership to roll out the scheme across Europe.

Oxford University IT Services provide training, equipment, digitisation and cataloguing expertise during the roadshow events across Europe.

The **British Library** is a lead player in Europeana Collections 1914-1918 – a three year project to digitise more than 400,000 items from national libraries in eight countries across Europe that found themselves on different sides of the conflict. The Library is also sending curatorial and cataloguing staff to the roadshow event to work alongside Oxford University colleagues in Banbury.

www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu/

JISC inspires UK colleges and universities in the innovative use of digital technologies, helping to maintain the UK's position as a global leader in education. JISC's work for the commemoration is focused on giving students, teachers and researchers in higher and further education access to a wealth of unique and authoritative digital resources that can be used and re-used to inspire research and teaching. This event will potentially 'unlock' resources of huge educational potential which have previously been kept in the nation's attics and drawers, so that we can increase our insight around the war and its legacy.

<http://jiscww1.jiscinvolve.org/wp/>

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum was established in 2000 to find a permanent home for the archives and collections of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, The Oxfordshire Yeomanry and the Oxford University Officers Training Corps, whilst also being a museum of conflict and county. After several successful exhibitions including 'Children and War', work on a new building including a research



centre began in August 2012 at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock. It is expected to open to the public in October 2013.

www.sofo.org.uk

Banbury Museum

Banbury Museum opened in 2002, and is situated in an attractive town centre and waterside location. The iconic modern building displays local history collections and hosts touring exhibitions. The Museum offers a family friendly approach, with a busy programme of activities and events for all ages.

www.banburymuseum.org