



SOUTHEND SCHOOLS FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE LAUNCH

For immediate release – New Heritage Lottery Funded Schools Project in Southend-on-Sea

Imagine a sea of bright red poppies, all individually made by local school children, open to be enjoyed by everyone but commemorating those that died in the First World War – that is the aim of the Southend Schools Festival of Remembrance project.

The Southend Schools Festival of Remembrance (SSFR) is a National Lottery funded project from Southend based not for profit company Blade Education that focuses on helping school children to engage with remembrance and understand how memories are an important part of all our lives and remembering those who are no longer with us is an essential part of family living. We all have relatives who were alive during the First World War or Second World War and remembering them can be difficult for children as they might not have actually met them in person.

SSFR is a partnership project between Blade Education and the Leigh-on-Sea Branch of the Royal British Legion, Honorary Secretary, Bob O'Leary said "Our small Branch is both delighted and incredibly proud to be involved with such a great project that we hope will connect our local schoolchildren to the subject of Remembrance for many years to come"



(Children from Hinguar Primary School making clay poppies with SSFR Artist Mary Lister. Photographer Dean Trotter. These photos are free to use, to download them go to: <https://goo.gl/photos/kiwDf396F1Mxyg4A8>)

Sir David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West and Patron of the Leigh Branch of the Royal British Legion had this to say about the project:

'The Southend Schools Festival of Remembrance is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the British Legion to keeping alive the memory of those who have given their lives for their country. The idea behind the project is most touching, giving young people a real connection to the sacrifice of previous generations. I am sure many people will go and see these wonderful poppies and the

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children will be proud of their achievements in being part of this tribute to the Southend Wave Exhibition.'

SSFR will be inviting all of the schools in Southend-on-Sea to take part in the production of a poppy exhibition at the Southend Cenotaph in the lead up to Remembrance Sunday this year that will display ceramic poppies made by the children and be a tribute to the Southend Wave Exhibition currently on the Barge Pier in Gunner's Park, Shoeburyness. By working with school children SSFR aims to re-establish the importance of remembrance with the younger generation.

Working with SSFR is local artist Mary Lister who will be designing our poppies so that children of all ages can make them and take part in a colourful public exhibition that will allow everyone to see their work together.



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The first school to make their poppies is the Hinguar Primary and Nursery School in Shoeburyness. As part of SSFR they recently took all of their pupils to visit the Wave exhibition and are totally engaged with the exhibition and guiding their pupils through understanding the importance of remembrance. Head teacher, Mrs Viv Stevens had this to say about SSFR...

"We are very grateful to be part of this exciting and poignant project. As a school situated in the Shoebury Garrison and overlooking the Poppies: Wave project; this opportunity is significant in helping our school community to develop our understanding of place, to reflect, remember and show respect for our local history and the lives of the local families who were involved with or effected by the First and Second World Wars. The children have found this a thought provoking project and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with Mary Lister a local artist to produce the charming clay poppies and have been inspired by their discussions with member of the Royal British Legion and the work around bringing the stories of real life service men and women from the local area to life."

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As well as producing the whole town exhibition of ceramic poppies, SSFR is working closely with 4 schools to bring to life the stories of Southenders from the 1914-1918 era. During what they called the First World War our society changed in ways that still have repercussions today and SSFR will work with our 4 ambassador schools to help their pupils to explore that time and meet some of the people who lived, loved, worked and died in Southend at that time. Project Manager, Beth Hooper says “We are really grateful to all those people who buy National Lottery tickets and make this kind of work possible. If anyone would like to know about the project and getting involved, please do get in touch.”



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SSFR has been funded by a £59,900 National Lottery grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, young people have the opportunity to share the lives of people from their communities and explore the lasting legacy of the First World War in Southend. We’re pleased to support this creative project which will put young people in the driving seat of ensuring the stories of their fellow Southenders are not forgotten.”

The Southend Schools Festival of Remembrance runs between May 2017 and August 2018 and hopes to leave a legacy of information and understanding around remembrance that will help more people engage with this important part of our heritage.

For more information please visit the SSFR website www.ssfr.org.uk or email the project team on ssfr@blade-education.org.uk

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Notes for Editors...

About the Heritage Lottery Fund:

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported

About The Royal British Legion:

The Legion was founded by veterans after the First World War. A century on from the start of that conflict, we're still helping today's Service men and women, veterans, and their families in almost every aspect of daily life. We also champion Remembrance, safeguarding the memory of those who have given their lives for our freedom through Remembrance education and events.

We help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families all year round. We also campaign to improve their lives, organise the Poppy Appeal and remember the fallen.

About Blade Education:

Blade Education is a not for profit organisation based in Southend-on-Sea that works within the local community to create new links to heritage. We believe passionately in lifelong learning with a special emphasis on building bridges between the older and younger generations.

www.blade-education.org.uk

For more information about SSFR please contact Beth Hooper on 0207 0973935 or email beth@blade-education.org.uk

Photographs:

These photographs have been approved by Hinguar Primary School and Blade Education. The photographs are of children from Hinguar Primary School working with the Project Artist, Mary Lister. The photographer is Dean Trotter.

To download the original versions please use our Google Drive link:
<https://goo.gl/photos/kiwDf396F1Mxyg4A8>

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