



CROSSING DIVIDES

*How ARTS and HERITAGE
can help bring us together*

JILL RUTTER AND SUNDER KATWALA

British
Future...

*Cover images (clockwise from top left):
Audience at Dr Blighy. Nutkhut 2016.
Photograph Linda Nylind.
Audience at Five Telegrams. Anna Meredith
and 59 Productions 2018. Photograph Justin Sutcliff.
Big Big Sing participants as part of
Memorial Ground 2016.*

In commissioning this report, I4-I8 NOW wanted to bring an independent perspective on the First World War centenary arts programme, its legacy and lessons for the future. The views and recommendations expressed in this report are therefore solely those of the authors and of British Future, which conducted the research. British Future maintains full editorial independence from I4-I8 NOW and the views and recommendations in the report do not necessarily reflect those of I4-I8 NOW, which hopes it is an important contribution to the continuing discussion about how others can now build on the lessons for the future.

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CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction and summary* **5**
- 2. The First World War Centenary* **8**
- 3. The context* **11**
- 4. What we found: The legacy and lessons of 14-18 NOW* **12**
- 5. What next: Can arts and heritage bring us together?* **24**
- 6. Recommendations* **34**
- Appendices* **36**
- About British Future* **45**
- About 14-18 NOW* **45**
- Notes and references* **46**

*Poppies: Weeping Window. Paul Cummins
and Tom Piper 2018. Photograph Ellie Kurtz.*



I. INTRODUCTION

The centenary of the First World War was a major national and international event. Although most nations that took part in this conflict did mark its centenary through official acts of commemoration, what was distinctive about the centenary in the UK was the very high levels of public support and participation, across social and political divides.

“Today’s young people will be carrying forward the torch of remembrance”

The centenary commemorations put remembrance, youth and education centre-stage. As the Prime Minister’s Special Representative for the Centenary, Andrew Murrison MP, stated:

“Young people were in the frame a century ago, and today’s young people will be carrying forward the torch of remembrance.”¹

Including an arts programme as part of the centenary commemorations was a way of achieving this aim, and involving a younger and more diverse audience than is usually involved in war commemorations.

The scale and range of arts activities that were organised by 14-18 NOW, the UK’s arts programme for the First World War centenary, played a foundational role in achieving such high levels of participation in all parts of the UK and among those of all ages, faith and ethnic groups and social classes.

These events took place against the backdrop of heightened concern about social divisions within the UK. The period 2014 to 2018 saw two general elections, the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 and the vote to leave the European Union. The latter, in particular, drew new attention to long-standing and deeper social fissures – particularly by geography, across nations and regions, and between cities and towns; by social class, ethnicity and generation.

In 2014, the first year of 14-18 NOW, there were

28 programmes of artistic work delivered across the UK, culminating in the arts event *LIGHTS OUT* on the evening of 4 August 2014 when millions of people across the UK turned off their lights to mark 100 years since the country’s entry into the war. Over the five-year programme, 107 projects were delivered as part of 14-18 NOW, in all the nations and regions of the UK.

Exploring the tensions in British society is a key theme for artists, given that these are some of the central themes of our times. Cultural policy-makers would see the arts – with its ability to engender empathy and perspective-taking – having a key role to play in bridging ‘them and us’ polarisations in society. But it is near impossible for the arts to build bridges while practitioners and audiences are drawn heavily from the wealthier and most educated sections of society. Evidence from the evaluations of 14-18 NOW shows that the arts programme did reach new audiences. But given the context that we live in, it is crucial to distil lessons from 14-18 NOW, to learn how it achieved this, whether and how it managed to transcend social divides and the impact of doing so. This is the focus of this report: on the lessons that can be learned from the First World War centenary arts programme and how these might be applied to future arts and heritage programming.

Our research also looked at the ‘what next?’ question for those working in the arts and heritage sectors. The First World War centenary is one among many anniversaries, national ‘moments’ and major festivals that will take place in the next 30 years. As a nation we will soon mark the 75-year anniversary of the Second World War. The next City of Culture will be Coventry in 2021 and in the following year the Commonwealth Games are being held in Birmingham. A 2022 Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been announced by the Government.

We also ask whether and how similar levels of public reach and engagement can be achieved by the arts more broadly – outside of major national moments that have their own power to connect and bring people together.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

British Future undertook this research after 14-18 NOW put out a tender for a think-tank to reflect on the legacy and lessons of the programme. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and of British Future, which retains editorial control. They are independent of 14-18 NOW, which commissioned this piece of work.

This research aims to examine the legacy and lessons of 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary. We are particularly interested in how the 14-18 NOW programme reached new audiences. The research aims to add value to the existing evaluations of 14-18 NOW being carried out by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre.

Given the political and social context in which 14-18 NOW took place, we explore whether the centenary arts programme has in any way brought people together and helped heal social divides.

We also want to identify ways in which lessons

from 14-18 NOW can inform future opportunities to extend participation in the arts and heritage and bridge social divides.

METHODOLOGY

Our research comprised:

Desk research, including the existing evaluation evidence from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre.

A short artist and partner organisation survey, sent to those who were involved in 14-18 NOW. The survey looked at the lessons from 14-18 NOW in reaching new audiences and how the arts and heritage sectors can bridge social divides. There were 74 responses to this survey.

Five artist and partner organisation discussions in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London and Coventry. These explored practitioner perspectives of 14-18 NOW, and looked forward to discuss how the legacy and lessons of the programme might be applied in the future, beyond the centenary, at the level of individual organisations, cities and regions

Mametz. Owen Sheers and National Theatre Wales 2014. Photograph Mark Douet.





PROCESSIONS. Artichoke and Darrell Vydellingum 2018. Photograph Flint PR.

or nationally. We selected Coventry for a discussion as it will be the 2021 UK City of Culture.

Four public discussions, each with 10 members of the public, in Folkestone, Glasgow, Leicester and Sunderland. The rationale for selecting these locations is given in Table 1.1. A professional focus group recruitment organisation was used to select participants according to agreed demographic and social criteria. The discussion followed a guide and we used video clips from 14-18 NOW programmes to provoke debate about participants' views of the programme and of culture more generally. Short summaries of key themes raised in each discussion are given in the appendix.

A nationally-representative online survey of 2,000 adults in Great Britain. This was undertaken by ICM between 15 and 18 February 2019.

In addition to the core sample of 2,000 adults we boosted the samples of 16 and 17 year olds and minority ethnic citizens to provide more detailed findings on these groups. The overall sample size came to 2,260 people. The survey examined attitudes to the arts and history and participation in cultural and heritage sector activities, as well as specific questions about participants' views on the 14-18 NOW programme. A full list of the ICM survey questions, together with summary findings, is given in the appendix.

Table 1.1 Rationale for selection of focus groups

Location	Population	Rationale for selection
Folkestone	51,000	Folkestone hosted Danny Boyle's <i>Pages of the Sea</i> , as well as other activities that were part of the broader commemorations. Over 10 million troops passed through the town on their way to or from France and there is a visible legacy of the First World War in the town.
Glasgow	631,000	<i>We're here because we're here</i> went to Glasgow and one of 14-18 NOW's educational programmes took place in the city. The participants were aged between 16 to 25 and the discussion explored young people's views of 14-18 NOW, as well as their engagement with the arts, history and heritage, and how future festivals could be made relevant to Scotland.
Leicester	443,000	Leicester is the UK's most ethnically diverse city and half the focus group were from minority ethnic communities. The discussion explored the portrayal of Commonwealth soldiers in the First World War and how the arts and heritage could bridge ethnic divides in the UK.
Sunderland	174,000	Roker Beach in Sunderland was a site for <i>Pages of the Sea</i> and the film <i>Asunder</i> , commissioned by 14-18 NOW, explored the city's involvement in the First World War. Other 14-18 NOW programmes took place nearby in Newcastle and Ashington. Sunderland was also selected because it has a strong military heritage and it is in the lowest 20% of local authorities for adult engagement with the arts.

2. The First World War Centenary and 14-18 NOW

An outline of activities to mark the First World War centenary was announced by the Prime Minister in October 2012. Dr Andrew Murrison MP was appointed the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Centenary Commemorations, although this responsibility sat separately from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport which was the lead department for the centenary.

As well as Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (as lead department), the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were involved in the broader centenary commemorations, alongside a number of non-departmental public bodies, councils, heritage and arts organisations. Committees were set up to oversee the centenary in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

14-18 NOW commissioned 107 projects in 220 locations across the UK

The commemoration involved many different activities, of which 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, was only one part. Overall, £50 million of public funds was announced as having been allocated to the centenary as a whole, although many of the programmes of work were successful in raising other funds, including from private philanthropy. Other aspects of the centenary commemoration included:

- Official services of remembrance throughout the four-year-period, in the UK and overseas, ending with National Services of Remembrance in November 2018 to mark the Armistice.
- The refurbishment of the First World War galleries at the Imperial War Museum London (IWM) and a permanent home in Belfast for HMS Caroline, the last surviving warship of 1914-1918.

- *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, 888,246 ceramic poppies installed at the Tower of London in 2014, each one of which represented a British or colonial life that was lost on the Western Front in the First World War. In 2015 two sculptural elements of the artwork, *Wave and Weeping Window*, were bought by two benefactors and gifted to 14-18 NOW and IWM; 14-18 NOW then toured them in 19 locations across the UK between 2015 and 2018.

- Programmes within the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England, including community grants and £15 million to enable young people, working in their communities, to conserve, explore and share local heritage of the First World War.

- An educational fund of £5.3 million, administered by the Department for Education and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, enabled two students and one teacher from every English state school to visit battlefields and undertake research on local people who fought in the war. Devolved administrations had their own, separate educational programmes.

14-18 NOW

14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, was set up independently from Government in 2013 and hosted by IWM. It had three overarching aims:

- To support the creation of a rich and stimulating body of new art using First World War heritage as an inspiration.
- To work collaboratively and in partnership with a wide range of UK and international arts and cultural organisations to realise the potential of 14-18 NOW.
- To engage communities all over the UK, especially young people and new audiences, to reflect on the period of the First World War, broadening awareness and bringing new perspectives.

In three 'seasons' over the centenary period, 14-18 NOW commissioned 107 projects in 220 locations



400 EVENTS IN 220 LOCATIONS

14-18 NOW commissioned 107 projects in more than 220 locations across the UK. In addition to the locations highlighted on this map, showing the programme's broad geographic reach, there were 78 projects with an online, nationwide or touring element such as *They Shall Not Grow Old*, *LIGHTS OUT* and the world premier of John Tavener's *Requiem Fragments* at the BBC Proms.



They Shall Not Grow Old. Peter Jackson 2018. Colourised by Wingnut Films. Still courtesy IWM.

across the UK. Many different art-forms were used: film, theatre, literature, mass participation events, visual arts, digital and music. Two-thirds of the events were free. Moreover, the artists and partner organisations involved in 14-18 NOW were often successful in raising additional funds or developing additional components to the work. Some of this work is still going on – one of the legacies of 14-18 NOW.

Education and community engagement were also core components of 14-18 NOW's work, with many of the programmes involving outreach to schools or work with local communities.

We do not have space to list all the work that took place through 14-18 NOW, although we have described some of the events in this report. Some of the largest programmes of work, in relation to audience numbers, included:

- *LIGHTS OUT*, where households across the UK turned off their lights, plunging 16.7 million people² into darkness to mark the centenary of the UK entering the First World War.
- *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*, a nationwide writing project where 21,000 people, including many schoolchildren, wrote letters to the 'unknown soldier'. The letters were published online and some were published in an anthology.
- *They Shall Not Grow Old*, a new film using

colourised archival footage, directed by Peter Jackson. Its reported BBC audience totalled over 3.9 million with a further 78,000 watching the film in cinemas.

21,000 people, including many children, wrote letters to the 'unknown soldier'

- *We're here because we're here*, Jeremy Deller's work involving 1,400 silent volunteers dressed in replica First World War uniforms, who appeared in groups at railway stations, shopping centres and high streets across the UK.
- *PROCESSIONS* by Artichoke, which commemorated a century of women's suffrage. This started at community level, bringing together groups of women to produce decorated banners that were brought to mass processions in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London.
- *Poppies: Wave and Weeping Window*, the tour of the poppies across the UK, by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper.
- *Pages of the Sea*, devised by Danny Boyle on 32 beaches across the UK and Ireland on Armistice Day in 2018, engaging 94,500 people across the beaches and millions more online.

3. The CONTEXT

The First World War commemorations took place at a time of political uncertainty and growing concerns about social divides. The vote to leave the EU highlighted these divisions and provoked soul-searching in the arts and heritage sectors about how to respond. Generally, it was the younger and more diverse cities that voted Remain, while towns were more likely to vote Leave. These divisions are mirrored in levels of engagement and participation in the arts. There were also other contextual issues, for our society and the arts and heritage sectors, in which this research was set, most importantly:

- Future anniversaries and festivals: 75 years since the end of the Second World War (2020), Coventry as City of Culture (2021), the Commonwealth Games (2022), the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (2022), 100 years of the BBC (2022) and the planned Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2022).
- Anniversaries in the island of Ireland that still have the potential to be divisive, including 100 years since the ending of the war of independence, the partition of Ireland and creation of Northern

Ireland (2021-22); and the civil war (2022-23). The year 2022 will also mark 50 years since Bloody Sunday and the worst year for casualties in the Troubles.

- The Government comprehensive spending review, due in late 2019, will allocate levels of spending for each government department and shares of public spending for the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This will set out the overall parameters of public spending for the arts.
- Live debate about the distribution of funding for the arts, with concerns that smaller cities and towns miss out, particularly in Northern England.
- Within the arts, a new Arts Council England ten-year strategy for 2020-2030 will set out funding policy for the next ten years. Consultation about the policy is taking place in 2019.
- A new five-year strategy from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, launched in early 2019, which places greater emphasis on how the heritage sector can help people and places to thrive.

Spectra. Ryoji Ikeda. Part of LIGHTS OUT 2014. Photograph Jonathan Perugia.



4. What we found: The LEGACY and LESSONS of 14-18 NOW

On 4 August 2014 millions of people across the UK turned off their lights to mark the centenary of the UK entering the First World War. *LIGHTS OUT* was the culmination of the first season of 14-18 NOW, the arts programme for the First World War centenary. Its aim was to use inspiring art to connect people with history and heritage.

Over the centenary period 107 projects were put on in more than 220 locations across the UK. Different aspects of the First World War were explored, using a variety of art forms. Public approval of the tone and content of 14-18 NOW was high and the programme reached new audiences. ICM research for this report found that 76% of the population felt it was a good idea to have an arts programme across the UK to mark the First World War centenary, with this support even extending to those least interested in history (62%) or the arts (69%)³. Our research also showed that 14-18 NOW brought people together.

The First World War centenary arts programme had a major impact on those who attended its events. Formal evaluations of 14-18 NOW have highlighted this emotional impact and the civic pride it generated in the places that hosted programmes⁴. It enabled audiences to make individual and local connections to the First World War, sentiments voiced strongly in our focus group discussions in Folkestone and Sunderland where the majority of people in each group had taken part in the centenary arts programme.

“Pages of the Sea was different... because of the local connection to the First World War. That got people interested. They could talk about how soldiers go from here, it’s about the local history. It’s going to have people interested and its going to be popular and it’s not looking down on anyone and it’s getting the local community involved.”

(Participant, Folkestone focus group).

There is also a wider legacy of this programme and many lessons for future national commemorations and festivals. Here we report on what we consider to be the learnings and legacy of 14-18 NOW, in particular looking at its engagement of new audiences, its capacity to bring people together and

lessons for future national commemorations, festivals and arts commissioning more broadly.

ENGAGEMENT OF NEW AUDIENCES

One hundred years after Armistice Day in November 2018, nearly half the UK population (48%) was aware of *Pages of the Sea*⁵. In Folkestone, where the portrait of Wilfred Owen washed into the sea, an estimated 8,000 people attended and in Sunderland attendance was similarly high. Moreover, those who attended *Pages of the Sea* and many of the other events appeared to represent a cross-section of society.

“It’s nice to get the younger ones involved too”

“It was just fascinating, how many people were taking part... I’ve got a five and a ten year old and they were talking about it and getting involved which I thought was quite good. I think a lot of things with the arts they’re for the older people and it’s nice to get the younger ones involved too. There was a vast number of people there, thousands.”

(Participant, Sunderland focus group).

As well as high-profile national events, about a third of the Folkestone and Sunderland focus groups recounted local and lower-profile cultural events they had attended, not all of which were formally part of the 14-18 NOW programme. Indeed, in addition to 14-18 NOW’s programme there was a wide range of other cultural activities, from arts organisations and individual artists, both professional and amateur. In all of our meetings with artists and partner organisations we were told of the artistic and social legacy of the programmes, where partner organisations had taken forward the original work commissioned by 14-18 NOW in different directions.

“Now The Hero [by artist Marc Rees] used volunteers to grow the vegetables that went into the soup that was in the play. The vegetable garden led to the Graft



Pages of the Sea. Danny Boyle 2018.

Project, which has continued to use volunteers including unemployed young people who improved their soft skills.”

(Wales, partner organisation).

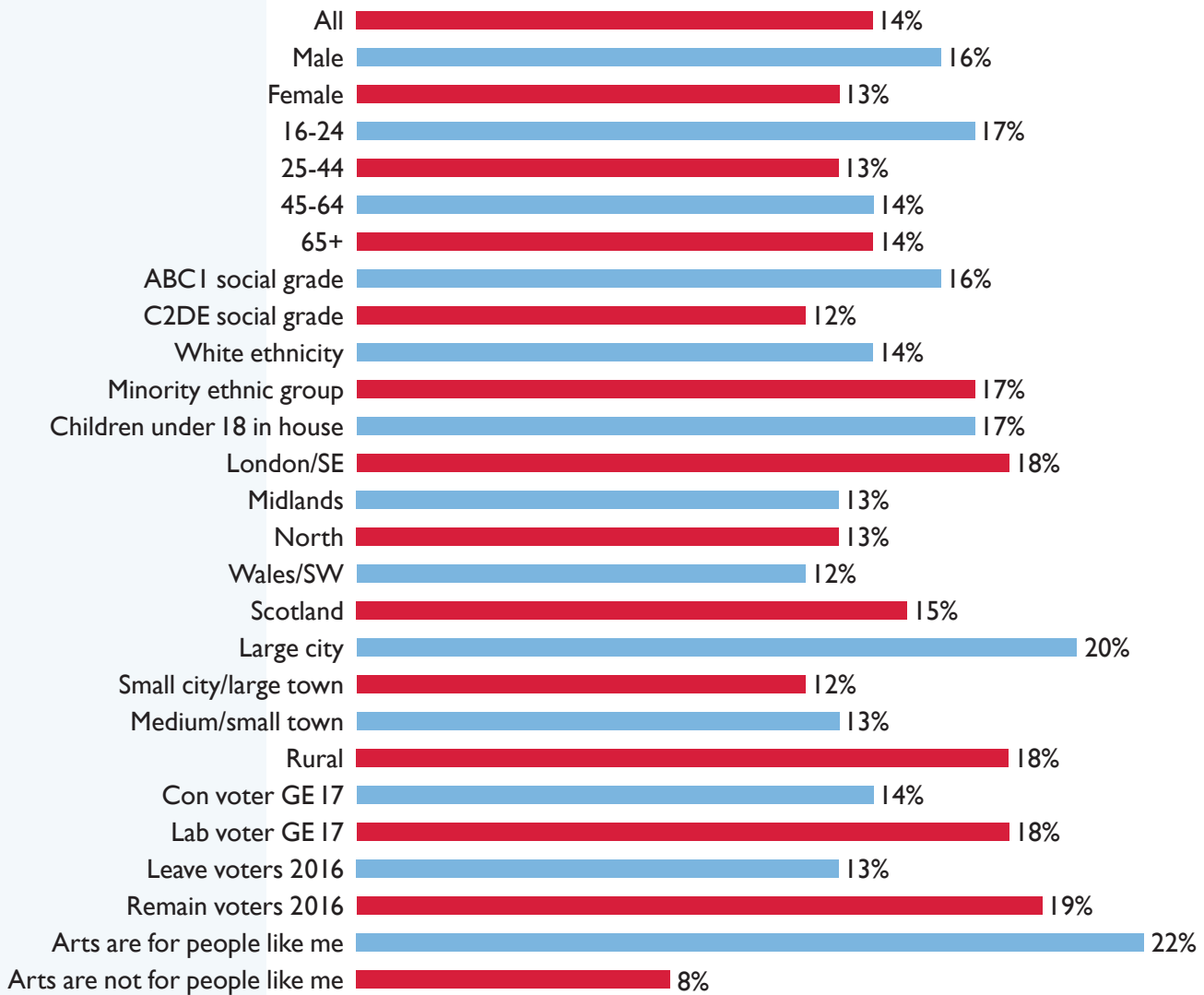
There was strong support for an arts programme to mark the First World War centenary, with 76% of survey participants agreeing it was a good idea, and comparatively little difference in levels of support among different social groups. ICM’s research for British Future found that 14% of the GB population over 16 could recall personally going to, experiencing or watching a First World War centenary arts event when shown images of 14-18 NOW projects^{6,7} (see appendix). The number of people that were reached by 14-18 NOW programmes is likely, however, to be higher as this question is about intentional engagement. While the authors consider it legitimate to use such a ‘tight’ definition of participation, it is likely to miss those who encountered 14-18 NOW activities – *We’re here because we’re here*, for example – by chance or without realising they were 14-18 NOW activities. The question also depends on the accuracy of memory and the 14% participation rate also excludes Northern Ireland, as well as children who took part in 14-18 NOW’s education programme or participated in other events through their schools, with their families for through their own endeavours. ‘Legacy’ activities will also not be included; since 14-18 NOW’s programme formally ended, some film and theatre productions

have received further viewings. Overall, many more people have been touched by the centenary arts programme. A 2019 evaluation by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre⁸ estimated that there were 41 million engagements with 14-18 NOW.

Using our survey findings, Figure 4.1 gives a breakdown of those who took part in 14-18 NOW by their characteristics. Overall, social grade was the only statistically significant factor associated with participation in 14-18 NOW (we provide further statistical analysis in the appendix). Some of the differences in levels of engagement among different ethnic groups are a consequence of social grade, for example.

Surveys consistently show much higher female participation in the arts but the reverse is true for 14-18 NOW⁹. There is substantial evidence that new audiences took part in the 14-18 NOW programme, including social groups who are less likely to participate in the arts and people who do not usually take part in official war commemorations. Although social grade was ultimately the factor most strongly associated with participation, we felt that a participation rate of 12% for those in social grades C2, D and E was high, when viewed alongside other data on participation in the arts¹⁰. Securing a participation rate of 8% among those who stated that *“the arts are not for people like me”* is also indicative of the high approval for the centenary arts programme across the population.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of GB population aged 16+ who recalled personally going to, experiencing or watching a selection of First World War centenary arts events.



n=2,260. Source: ICM research for British Future, 2019. Respondents were shown a selection of images of 14-18 NOW projects and were asked if they personally went to, experienced or watched a First World War centenary arts event.

HOW WAS THIS REACH ACHIEVED?

Despite some differences, the level of active engagement in the 14-18 NOW programme across different social groups was high and 90% of the artists and partner organisations that took part in the survey thought their programme had reached new audiences. This was because:

- Many of the events were free, so income was not a barrier to participation.

- The programme was delivered across the UK and there was a real commitment to fill gaps in geographic coverage, with 81% of the programme taking place outside London. Although there was higher participation in 14-18 NOW in London and the South East, just 12% of respondents in our ICM research felt that the centenary arts programme was concentrated in the capital¹¹.

- A wide variety of art forms were used which explored a range of aspects relating to the First World War period. Together with explicit local



Poppies: Weeping Window. Paul Cummins and Tom Piper 2017. Photograph Darren Kidd.

connections, this meant that the 14-18 NOW programmes appealed to a wide audience.

“The stories we commissioned used animals in the First World War as a theme and this was palatable for younger audiences as a way into serious issues.”

(Partner organisation, England)

- Partner organisations usually had good links with local communities and spent time working with schools and local populations in ways that increased participation – although some partner organisations felt that they had insufficient time to plan and deliver this work.
- The use of volunteers in some of the programmes increased participation.
- Larger events secured television coverage, with ICM research (Figure 4.4) showing that television was the most important means by which the public heard about the 14-18 NOW programme.
- The messaging of the promotional material resonated with people who were less likely to engage in the arts. They saw the programme as something that was relevant and interesting to them.

“The Poppies had huge popularity from the Tower installation, so when they came here on tour there was

genuine excitement and pride that the artwork was sited here. Local press and word-of-mouth meant that we had very high visitor numbers, many of whom weren’t conventional exhibition goers, with lots of cross-generational family groups.”

(Partner organisation, England).

CONTENT

14-18 NOW was national in scale but enabled people to make local and personal connections. It was this that made 14-18 NOW a success in terms of its audience engagement and impact.

“I think the success of Danny Boyle and 14-18 NOW was that it placed the story of the common man in the context of the system.”

(Partner organisation, England)

Artists, historians and the public were consulted before the programme began. This helped 14-18 NOW to set the right tone at the start and secure support for the programme across political divides.

Consultation and the time and freedom to explore ideas secured support for 14-18 NOW among artists and partner organisations who felt anxious that the programme might encourage jingoism or push an official, ‘English’ version of history.

The centenary arts programme also gave exposure to ‘hidden histories’, both local and national. Eight events explored the contribution of African and Indian soldiers, with 14-18 NOW likely to have contributed to increased awareness of the untold stories of soldiers from the Empire.¹²

“The older generation of the Sikhs, they were aware of it [the First World War], but the younger generation no so much. I didn’t learn it from my grandparents or the older generation. It was recently through social media I started seeing people posting all these things that had happened [in the First World War] and it was like ‘oh my gosh, I never knew that.’”
(Participant, Leicester focus group).

14-18 NOW was led by artists and not by government officials nor historians. The overall programme was supported by Imperial War Museums’ expertise and archival content. The breadth of issues explored in the 14-18 NOW programme was impressive yet there were some gaps. The programme was dominated by stories from the Western Front, with the Balkan and Mesopotamian Fronts receiving little exposure, although British and Commonwealth soldiers fought and died there in considerable numbers. Given the current salience of migration, it was disappointing that the story of the arrival of 250,000 Belgian refugees in 1914 was not explored in the 14-18 NOW programme¹³. But these gaps may be a consequence of a commissioning philosophy to be artist-led rather than seeking responses to specific briefs or themes; or indeed of a lack of archival material pertaining to Belgian refugees and the Balkan and Middle Eastern Fronts.

Histories of refugee flight, the diversity of the 1914-1918 armed forces and events on the eastern fronts are still an integral part of British history, but these hidden histories also have added resonance in an increasingly diverse society. Some partner organisations felt that in future the heritage sector needs to give more consideration to collection policies, nationally and locally, so that artists and others involved in major anniversaries have access to source material that enables them to tell these

hidden histories. The testimonies of Polish and Somali combatants who fought for Britain in World War Two, for example, will be lost unless they are collected now.

BRIDGING SOCIAL DIVIDES

The centenary period coincided with the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 and the EU referendum two years later. The latter, in particular, showed that the UK was a more divided society than we previously understood ourselves to be. In this context, we explored in detail whether 14-18 NOW and arts more broadly could bring people together and help bridge these divides.

There was a consensus among both the public and the arts sector that 14-18 NOW had bridged class, generational and ethnic divides, particularly where events took place in public space. This was supported by the ICM research, where half the respondents were shown a series of images from the 14-18 NOW programme including *Pages of the Sea*, *They Shall Not Grow Old*, *We’re here because we’re here* and the Poppies. Some 72% of those who saw the clips felt the arts can bring people together in the UK, compared with 64% who did not see the clips. Those who took part in the Folkestone and Sunderland focus groups also gave moving accounts of *Pages of the Sea* as an event that bridged generational and ethnic divides.

“The Gurkhas came and it brought the community together across generations.”

“The Gurkhas came and it brought the community together across generations: grandparents, parents, children, then again through the social sharing, on social media.”
(Participant, Folkestone focus group).

The Sunderland group were shown clips from the film *Asunder*, which used archive footage and oral



We're here because we're here. Jeremy Deller 2016. Photograph Andrew Fox.

history to tell the story of the city's involvement in the First World War. Participants felt that this film would help bridge some of the generational and political divisions in Sunderland; the group was palpably disappointed that none of them had been aware of the film and that it was not publicly available to schools and the community.

We spent time with artists and partner organisations discussing how and why culture can help bridge social divides. As society has become more individualised and collective ties have weakened, the arts can play a role in reversing this trend and offer a space for 'real time' relationships.

Artists and partner organisations felt that there were characteristics of the 14-18 NOW programme that made it particularly effective in bridging social divides. Many events took place in public space, enabling social contact and communication.

"The democracy of meeting together in a public space such as a beach or in a park or street that has shared public ownership is often a very strong leveller for the wider public to meet and share experiences."
(Artist, Scotland)

Projects also encouraged active participation, rather than being a more passive 'watching' experience. This encouraged communication between strangers. Over 2,000 volunteers took part in *We're here because we're here*, 1,400 of them dressed as soldiers, and

HOW DID 14-18 NOW'S PROGRAMME HELP TO BRIDGE SOCIAL DIVIDES?

- Community outreach and the decision to hold free events in public space meant those who attended many of the events represented a cross section of society.
- Much of the work provoked communication between strangers.
- Projects such as *PROCESSIONS* and *Pages of the Sea* required active participation.
- Some projects used volunteers, which promoted social contact.
- 14-18 NOW's programmes told a story about shared history.

thousands of volunteers assisted with the Poppies on tour. Other projects also used volunteers, promoting social contact and bridging divides.

14-18 NOW faced particular challenges in bridging the divides of Northern Ireland. *We're here because we're here* was taken to Belfast and Derry-Londonderry and was the first time since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that uniformed British



100: *Unearth*. *Wildworks 2018*. Photograph Steve Tanner.

troops were seen on the streets of Northern Ireland. The period 2014–2018 also included the marking of the centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016. An adviser was employed by 14–18 NOW for Northern Ireland specifically to negotiate these issues and make the programme there work.

“Four things were important: time to build trust, using local expertise and partners, work to gain the confidence of political leadership and a communications plan.”

(14–18 NOW adviser, Northern Ireland).

We also spent time talking about the role of the arts in bridging ethnic and faith divides. Some artists and partner organisations felt that *The Creative Case for Diversity*, Arts Council England’s current policy, placed its emphasis on workforce composition and on highlighting cultural difference, rather than on how those from different faith and ethnic groups might find common ground. Other artists and partner organisations believed that artists from minority ethnic groups felt obliged to produce work largely or solely about race or about their own community. Others disagreed, feeling that artistic practice had now moved on.

“The reality for artists of colour is that you expect to be commissioned to make stories about particular issues.”

(Partner organisation, England).

Artistic approaches to ethnic diversity were explored in the ICM research and the Leicester focus group where half the participants were white

British and half were from minority ethnic groups. Using photographs and video clips from 14–18 NOW commissions as prompts, the discussion explored the representation of black and Asian soldiers in the First World War. The group was particularly taken by the choice to use the story of Walter Tull as the *Pages of the Sea* portrait in Ayr in Scotland, as they felt that the location and nature of the event – free, participatory and outdoor – made Tull’s story an ‘everybody’ story which crossed ethnic divisions. (Ayr’s population is largely white; Walter Tull, a British Army officer killed in 1918, was of mixed race).

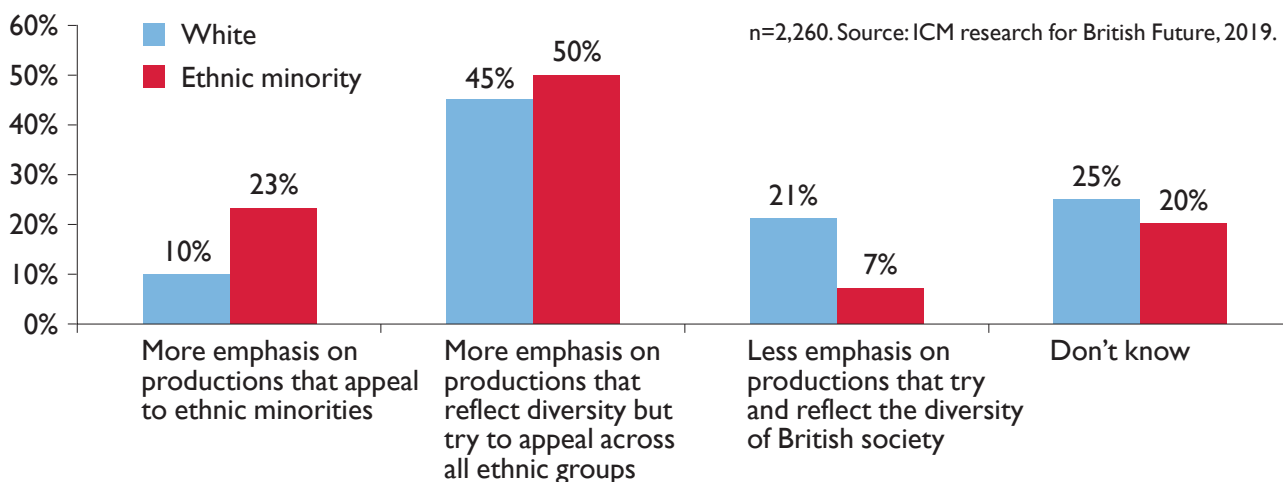
“I pictured myself on the beach seeing that sculpture of him, thinking about him.”

“I pictured myself on the beach seeing that sculpture of him, thinking about him. When you picture what he went through it plays on your emotions, so it reaches more of an audience.”

(Participant, Leicester focus group).

ICM research for this report found that nearly half (46%) of the public feels that the arts need to place more emphasis on productions that reflect diversity but try to appeal across all ethnic groups, with 50% of the minority ethnic respondents supporting this ‘diversity plus common ground’ approach.

Figure 4.2: In the context of increasing ethnic and faith diversity in British society, which of the approaches would you prefer to see arts organisations prioritise?



HISTORY AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reaching young people was an overarching aim of all of the centenary commemorations. As shown in Figure 4.1, participation in the centenary arts programme was relatively high among young people – a group who, as Figure 4.3 shows, tend to be least interested in heritage and history¹⁴. Moreover, analysis shows that among 16-24-year-olds there was no difference in participation in 14-18 NOW across the spectrum of qualification levels and social grades, in contrast to older age cohorts (see appendix). The earlier 14-18 NOW events took place when many of the younger participants were still at school and were a ‘captive’ audience, which may account for some of the higher level of participation across social grades.

The ICM research shows high levels of participation among young people but also lower levels of awareness about the centenary arts programme compared to other age groups. Just 43% of 16-17 year olds were aware of the centenary arts programme, compared with 56% of all survey respondents. Participants in our Glasgow young people’s focus group, for instance, had very little recall of the centenary arts programme. Only one of the ten participants had seen the poppies and two people remembered seeing *They Shall Not Grow Old*, (and then only after seeing a clip of the video). Half the group, however, remembered seeing the 2014

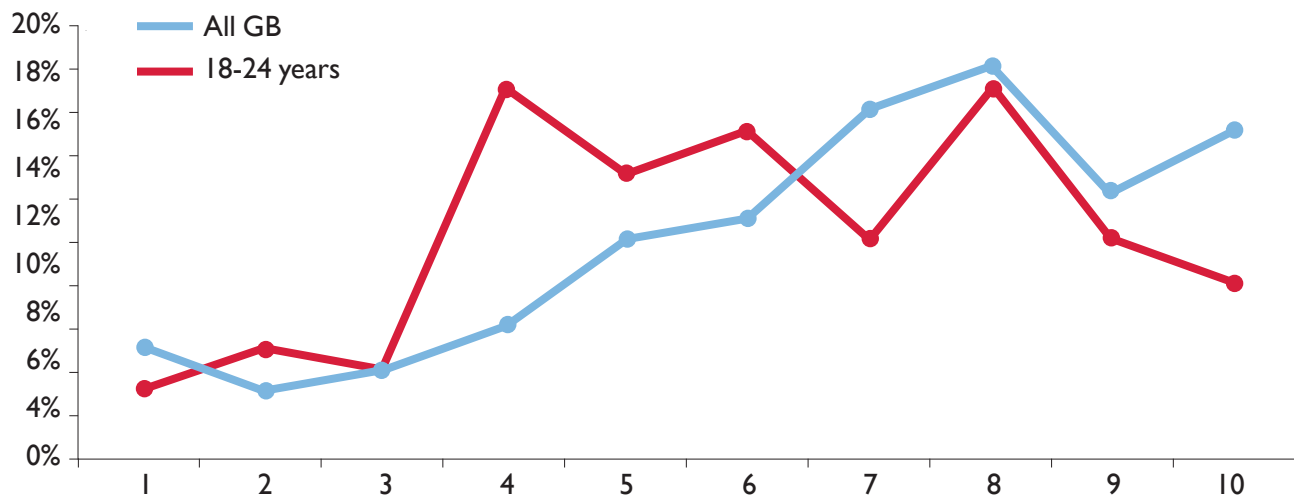
Sainsbury’s Christmas advert¹⁵ – which recreated the 1914 Christmas truce – and thought it was part of the arts programme.

Lower awareness of the 14-18 NOW programme among these two age cohorts has a range of causes which include:

- Lower interest in history and heritage (Figure 4.2).
- Lack of personal connection to the First World War and lower awareness because it does not feature in the school curriculum as much as the Second World War.
- A reliance on social media to receive news about events. Targeted Facebook advertising can mean that those who are not interested in the arts do not receive notification of cultural events.

While under-25s are less interested in history, our ICM research and focus groups showed more enthusiasm for the arts. Some 56% of 18-24s felt that the arts and culture were for people like them, compared with 49% of 25-34-year-olds, 47% of 35-44s and 41% of 45-54s. In Glasgow we spent time discussing how interest in history might be increased among young people, with participants suggesting that the subject needed to be made more participative and visual and that the arts had a role to play in this, alongside archaeological digs and visits to battlefields. One participant suggested that *We’re here because we’re here* soldiers should have

Figure 4.3: Interest in history on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means 'not at all interested' and 10 means 'very interested', self reported by age.



n=2,260. Source: ICM research for British Future, 2019.

made visits to schools. The Glasgow findings suggest that using the arts to connect people with history is particularly effective at reaching younger audiences.

“It’s not about the topic, it’s about getting involved, it’s about interaction... You’ve got to take note that people’s attention span is shorter than what it was back 20 years ago when these history courses were produced.”
(Participant, Glasgow focus group).

FUTURE FESTIVALS AND ANNIVERSARIES

The UK will mark other significant anniversaries in the near future. 2022 sees the centenary of the BBC, the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and a planned Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The coronation of our next monarch will be another national moment of commemoration. Our discussions with artists and the public explored what future festivals and national moments might learn from 14-18 NOW, particularly focusing on the planned Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Many people who took part in the focus groups felt that an arts programme should form part of future national commemorations, but this was qualified with concerns about its cost and worries that there would be insufficient events held outside big cities.

Out of the 40 people who took part in the focus groups, just one person had heard of the planned Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Views about the merits of the festival were mixed, with concerns about its cost and the geographic location of arts events balanced against qualified enthusiasm for a cultural programme, as long as events were held in all parts of the UK.

Our ICM research found that 62% of people think the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a good idea, with just 10% opposed. However, the idea that this is a ‘Festival of Brexit’ would dampen this somewhat in some places.

The Sunderland focus group spontaneously linked the Festival with Brexit (some national newspapers had labelled it as the ‘Festival of Brexit’). They felt it would be a divisive event in the city if it was linked to Brexit.

While artists and partner organisations were pragmatic about the festival and wanted to make a success of the cultural programme, welcoming additional funding for arts organisations, it was felt that money should be made available to run events across the breadth of the UK. They also voiced many concerns about the festival, including the lack of clarity of its aims.



Make Art Not War. Bob and Roberta Smith 2018.

“The problem with the Festival of Britain is that it is so nebulous. What’s it about? Is it about place? Or is it about promoting ourselves, global Britain and saying how great we are, like the Great Exhibition?”

(Partner organisation, London).

Some partner organisations felt that the programme would be internationally-focussed and little funding would reach smaller and non-London based organisations. There were also concerns that by now there was insufficient planning time to develop and schedule the programme, undertake school and community engagement and to shift the messaging of the festival away from Brexit.

The consensus was that the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland could be a success if it made local connections and took place across the UK, as 14-18 NOW had succeeded in doing.

“It [the festival] could easily become an English story, a London story and an establishment story of London establishment artists. 14-18 NOW avoided this... I am not sure about this Festival. You can’t just fly in Tracey Emin and expect people to engage.”

(Partner organisation, Northern Ireland).

CULTURE-LED REGENERATION

Across the UK, many festivals are now an integral part of culture-led regeneration, which aims to create jobs and in some cases reverse the physical decline of high streets. Culture-led regeneration is sometimes contentious because of the uncertainty of who it benefits and its associations with gentrification.

We talked about the impact of culture-led regeneration in all the artist/partner organisation discussions and with the Folkestone focus group in detail. Kent County Council has pursued such a policy, offering funding for arts organisations, business rate breaks and other support in towns such as Folkestone, Margate and Whitstable. Many of these new arrivals had opened businesses in the Old High Street area, now rebranded as the Cultural Quarter. The physical decline of this area had been halted, although there were questions about the sustainability of these businesses. There was a degree of pride that Folkestone was now renowned for its arts. But many in the focus group

felt that this new cultural offer was not always for 'local' people.

62% agreed that the UK should hold a Town of Culture programme to bring arts to places outside the big cities

"It makes it prettier... If you are on any say Facebook pages, like Friends of Folkestone, you will see these art programmes are very polarising, you have a certain part of the community that see it as an elitist thing. That is a real feeling that it doesn't speak to me, isn't for me, this is for the posh DFLs [Down From London] that come here and the tourists that it attracts. That is an issue that needs to be addressed." (Participant, Folkestone focus group).

The UK City of Culture competition has culture-led regeneration among its aims, with Historic

England's Heritage Action Zones taking a similar approach in the heritage sector. A number of politicians have recently called for a 'Town of Culture' programme to sit alongside the City of Culture¹⁶. We asked about this idea in the ICM research and in all of our discussions, finding strong public support: 62% of ICM respondents agreed that the UK should hold a Town of Culture programme to bring arts to places outside the big cities. Participants in the focus groups also supported this idea, but with the qualification that a Town of Culture programme must involve the local population.

Artists and partner organisation offered qualified support for a Town of Culture competition but with some reservations, particularly about the bidding process and legacy. It was felt that the bidding process must be simple and not require a large financial investment. There were also questions about whether enough towns had the artistic infrastructure to enable there to be a legacy after the programme ended.

Poppies: Weeping Window. Paul Cummins and Tom Piper 2016. Photograph Ellie Kurtz.



PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

Finally, planning and organisational issues were raised in the discussions, both with artists and partner organisations and sometimes with the public. Many of the topics that were raised are lessons for future national commemorations and festivals. These were:

1. Development time. Sufficient funder time needs to be allocated to cover historical research, as well as school and community engagement.

2. Promotion of events. Publicity was a theme raised in the focus groups and in the discussions with artists and partner organisations. It is also key to reaching new audiences. As already noted, most people found out about the 14-18 NOW programme through television coverage (Figure 4.4). Smaller programmes and those which were deemed less newsworthy received less broadcast media coverage. Social media coverage also tended to reach those who already had an interest in the arts. Future festivals need to incorporate these lessons in their marketing strategies, for example by using paid and targeted Facebook advertising.

3. Institutional learning. A commitment to reflection and learning was central to the way

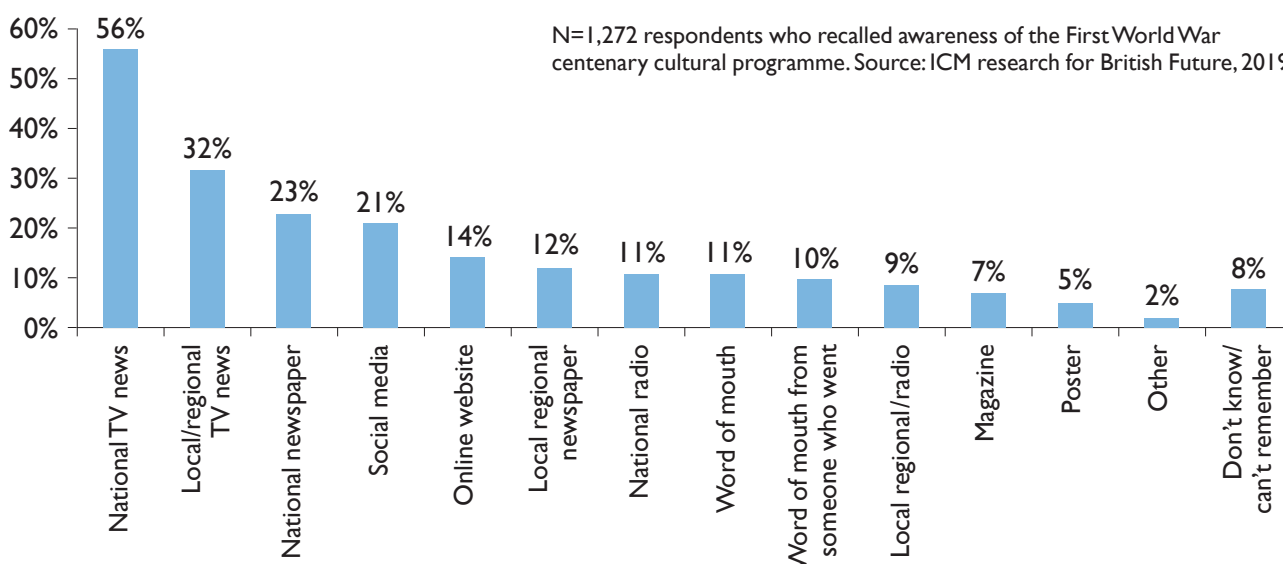
that 14-18 NOW worked, from its core team to partner organisations and artists. This contributed to personal development and learning among artists and partner organisations.

4. Robust methods of defining participation and collecting audience statistics. It is important for policymakers and those planning future national cultural programmes to have accurate methods to estimate active participation.

5. Legacy and revival. Films have been made, new art works too, but not all of the work is now accessible to the public. Sometimes this was because artistic legacy was not included in original project budgets, for example money to cover the costs of DVDs or the use of archival footage.

6. Coordination across Government departments. Most inter-departmental coordination worked well, but coordination with the Department for Education could have been better. There was little evidence to show how the Department for Education funded programme, which sent two students and a teacher from every state secondary school in England to battlefield sites, added value to the 14-18 NOW programme and vice versa.

Figure 4.4: Where did you see or hear about this programme of arts events for the First World War centenary?



5. What next: Can ARTS and HERITAGE bring us together?

Our society today is more anxious, divided and fragmented than any of us would want.

When Prime Minister David Cameron first spoke publicly about the contemporary meaning of the First World War centenary, at the Imperial War Museum in the Autumn of 2012, few anticipated the tumultuous public events of the next four years. It was a world where Donald Trump commanded only The Apprentice boardroom on television, and nobody had ever heard the word 'Brexit'.

Referendums in 2014 over Scottish independence and in 2016 over the European Union raised existential questions about identity, while two general elections generated unusually dramatic shifts in the tectonic plates of politics. As importantly, these dramatic political events cast new light on social polarisations – between the generations, across different nations and regions, between the cities and towns, by ethnicity and social class.

Crossing these divides is one of the challenges of our age. 14-18 NOW, the arts programme for the First World War centenary, sought to reach across them – and largely succeeded, at a time when that has become both more difficult and more important.

But the centenary of the First World War was a special context. The unfathomable scale of a conflict in which 16 million lives were lost – one million of them from Britain and the Commonwealth – commands our attention and respect. To let such an anniversary pass without marking it could break our link with those who came before us. The appeal of the centenary was partly that it offered people an opportunity to address an anxiety that those connections could be fading away. The centenary offered, for many, a chance to locate ourselves in something bigger: to find our personal connection, to the history of our family, our town or our country, or to understand how what happened a century ago had reshaped our world. The lessons of the centenary arts programme's public reach, especially the depth of emotional engagement, may be difficult to transfer to other contexts.

How can the arts continue to cross divides in these polarising times?

So, what shall we do without a centenary? How can the arts continue to cross divides in these polarising times?

As this was not 'the war to end all wars', the failure of the short peace means that the First World War centenary will have a successor too, in 20 years time. There is a direct opportunity to consider what can be learned from the experience of the First World War centenary when it comes to planning that of the Second World War, although the opportunities and challenges of this second centenary may also differ.

Yet we cannot wait two decades to consider again how culture can cross divides. There is an appetite to mark the moments that bring us together. 14-18 NOW did transcend the contemporary tensions across the nations of our sometimes dis-United Kingdom, but might the proposed Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2022 find that more difficult? What are the other major national moments which might help us to do so?

*Across and In-Between. Suzanne Lacy 2018.
Photograph Helen Sloan and Ross Mulhall.*





Spectra. Ryoji Ikeda. Part of LIGHTS OUT 2014. Photograph Jonathan Perugia

At the same time as we explore the opportunities presented by forthcoming national moments, we should also remember that involvement in the arts is a year-round activity. Funding special projects at key moments cannot come at the expense of core arts funding for galleries, theatres, school and local music services. And reaching new audiences across social divides should not be seen as something which the arts sector only aspires to do on special occasions. We must also seek out the effective and practical ways to apply the lessons of 14-18 NOW to give this greater priority as an everyday norm of arts policy and practice.

CROSSING DIVIDES: IS THIS WHAT THE ARTS SHOULD DO?

There was a considerable heightening of public concerns about social division during the centenary. The UK of today understands itself to be more deeply divided than we had previously understood, a sentiment shown in ICM’s research for this report (Figure 5.1). Ironically, this sense of social division resonates with broad majorities of the population – across the generations, regions, social classes and ethnic groups.

Figure 5.1: Perceptions about social divisions

‘British society is divided’	Net Agree	Net Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don’t know
All	74%	6%	17%	2%
Men	74%	8%	17%	2%
Women	75%	5%	18%	3%
ABC1 social grade	77%	6%	16%	1%
C2DE social grade	71%	7%	19%	3%
18-24s	58%	12%	23%	7%
65+	82%	3%	15%	<1%
White ethnicity	76%	5%	18%	1%
Minority ethnic group	63%	9%	23%	5%
London/SE	72%	8%	17%	4%
Midlands	72%	5%	20%	3%
North	77%	6%	17%	1%
Wales/SW	70%	7%	21%	2%
Scotland	87%	4%	8%	1%
Leave voter 2016	77%	6%	16%	1%
Remain voter 2016	75%	6%	16%	3%

n=2,260. Source: ICM research for British Future, 2019.



We're here because we're here. Jeremy Deller 2016. Photograph Andrew Fox.

We uncovered in this research a public appetite to find things that bring us together, but is that really the role of the arts? Taking too instrumental an approach presents dangers. If 'increasing participation' means lowering standards to seek greater accessibility, it risks producing bad art that patronises its audience. Artists are not running for public office. Isn't the artist's job also to provoke, to confront – sometimes to shock, and so to divide people too?

ICM's research for this report shows that nearly a fifth of people (18%) say that crossing divides is not the job of arts and culture, though this view was held most widely by those with the least interest in cultural activity, and much less so by those who take part in it. Among cultural practitioners, the dominant approach was to recognise the dangers but to take on the challenges and navigate them. 'Crossing divides is important – but it has to be implicit not explicit' was a recurring theme. Art for art's sake is a good principle for artists, yet there was an appetite to take artistic excellence to the widest possible audience, and to show that art of the highest quality can be participatory too. Certainly, cultural institutions that want to pitch for public resources and funding will have to show that excellence and reach are compatible.

We expect cultural practitioners to find new things to say about the state of the nation in divided times. If our 'them and us' perceptions of those we have little contact with are part of what divides us, culture's ability to engender empathy and perspective-taking could play a key role in helping to humanise and perhaps bridge the polarisations in our society.

Yet we have a public debate where culture-makers are more likely to be cast as part of the problem rather than the solution. People sometimes declare that this is an age of the 'culture war' between socially conservative and liberal tribes with little or no common ground. This is, in part, an attack on culture-makers themselves, caricatured as out-of-touch 'metropolitan elites' responsible for driving social polarisations over identity in our society. So it is not surprising that an instinctive response to that backlash, from culture-makers who feel under attack, is often to fight back by redoubling commitments to the values of inclusion and diversity which feel under threat, making sure that the right side wins the 'culture war'. If so much is at stake, both sides may find themselves increasing the temperature of the debate.

But is there another way to defend these foundational values effectively? The experience of 14-18 NOW was that culture could confidently

explore themes of war, peace and social change in ways that found common ground between our identity tribes. Rather than fighting this ‘culture war’, we could choose instead to make the deeper connections needed to defuse one.

The aspiration that the arts might help depolarise society will be difficult to achieve while practitioners and audiences skew heavily to one pole of these emerging educational and social divides. The discourse of outreach to ‘hard to reach’ audiences conveys a set of othering assumptions about the terms on which access can be extended. As with newspaper commentaries on the ‘left behind’ after the EU referendum, there is a sense that the subject of the pieces would be the last people who might read or see them. Nobody considers themselves ‘hard to reach’ – unless distant institutions are reluctant to turn up.

IT'S ALL ABOUT HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Teaching history well is challenging. At a time when school budgets are stretched extra costs, for example for visits, can be prohibitive. As we heard in the Glasgow focus group, history lessons can easily become a textbook study of national events which fails to excite young people. 14-18 NOW showed what can be achieved when history is made exciting. This needs to be sustained, through work that enables teachers, historians and artists to look at what is taught and takes forward initiatives that generate real excitement in learning: archaeological digs, visits or hands-on local history projects.

Should London always be the default option for iconic loans?

Local engagement is the key to extending social reach. When we met artists, partner organisations and members of the public we heard powerful testimony of local pride and ownership of the 14-18 NOW programme. Engagement in the 14-18 NOW

programme was high in both Sunderland and Folkestone, several hundred miles apart. That the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan’s centenary composition *All the Hills and Vales Along* took place at the Cumnock Festival in Ayrshire, prior to being played at London’s Barbican, was one example of how world-class work can be successfully hosted outside of the UK’s biggest cities. 14-18 NOW showed that arts and culture can have a much broader geographical and social reach than its public reputation often suggests.

Arts and culture can achieve broad social and geographic reach – but perhaps it is a problem that we see this as an extraordinary achievement of special projects. It would take a bigger strategic commitment to exploring how we think about geography – and funding – for such reach to become a less remarkable norm. A ‘Town of Culture’ programme, to sit alongside the UK City of Culture, might do this. While towns are not prevented from applying to be a UK City of Culture, only one, Paisley, has ever made the shortlist. A Town of Culture competition, if its programme was targeted at local residents, may go some way in addressing some of the longstanding inequalities in participation in the arts across the UK.

During the centenary millions of people saw the poppies in 19 locations, making it one of the UK’s most visited non-permanent pieces of art. *The Wave and Weeping Window* tour contributed to civic pride and brought benefits to local economies. Exhibitions of iconic pieces of art can bring communities together: we heard from participants in our Sunderland group about their pride that their city had been chosen to show some Leonardo da Vinci drawings on loan from the Royal Collection. The Bayeux Tapestry will be one of the UK’s next must-see exhibitions. Should it be shown in London? Or would another of the UK’s cities benefit from hosting this stunning work? Should London always be the default option for iconic loans or might other places with good transport links and a heritage infrastructure be considered? There is some precedent for locating major exhibitions outside London, with Liverpool’s recent Terracotta Warriors exhibition generating £78 million for the local economy and being seen by over 600,000 people.

TAKING DIVERSITY OUT OF THE BOX

Seven out of ten people now know that Indian soldiers fought in the First World War, something that was minority knowledge in 2014¹⁷. This has been the biggest shift in public attitudes recorded during the centenary. The Commonwealth contribution became not a minor tributary but a major theme of the commemorations – thanks in part to a subtle shift in thinking about who the story of Commonwealth participation was for. Initially, multi-ethnic, multi-faith participation was seen as primarily a route to include ethnic minority communities, who might not have seen heritage as being for them. By 2018, the sense of the relevant audience had got broader. This was not about Sikh history for Sikhs, or the story of the Muslim contribution for Muslims, but about locating those stories as part of the shared history of Britain, relevant to both minorities and majorities alike.

That journey might inform how the cultural sector could deepen its thinking about diversity. Within the arts world, ‘diversity’ is almost always seen

Dr Blighy. Nutkbut 2016. Photograph Linda Nyland.



through the lens of ethnicity, yet there are many diversities and many inequalities within British society, not least of which is social class. Taking ethnic diversity seriously has been an increasingly important theme since the 1990s. Yet it is not enough just to stress the essential value of diversity for culture while continuing to acknowledge its regrettable absence. Arts Council England’s strategic vision consulting on the 2020s is typical. It notes that “*although awareness of the issue is greater than it used to be, there remains a persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural institutions*”.

The Commonwealth contribution became not a minor tributary but a major theme of the commemorations

It is a familiar theme, to be found in many previous reports, across the two decades from *Whose Heritage* in 1999 – a recurring commitment to breaking down barriers, to giving more of a share of platform and voice to minority voices so as to express the experiences of all of our communities.

The frustrations and ‘diversity fatigue’ of minority ethnic cultural practitioners are not solely that this recurring debate reflects the slow pace of change. There is a frustration among minority ethnic artists and audiences at a lack of recognition or opportunity to tell those stories, yet a recurring experience is also that this ‘deficit model’ about the missing voices of diverse communities creates narrow expectations from commissioners and producers about the stories that they are expected to tell. As one ethnic minority artist told us:

“The Creative Case for Diversity’ is inherently somewhat pigeon-holing, in how it articulates what the creative case for diversity is. Part of the question about who will get commissioned is ‘Why you?’.



Pages of the Sea. Danny Boyle 2018. Photograph Oskar Proctor.

The answer suggested to minority artists is that they have the authenticity to tell the minority story better than anybody else can. If the creative case for diversity is authenticity, then the role of the diverse artist becomes one of telling the stories that only they can tell.”

An unwanted upshot of this approach, however, is that minority artists – save for the most established – can find that they are rarely seen as having the potential to tell universal stories too. While the artist quoted above was interested in telling ‘untold’ stories, from his lived reality, about the minority experience, he found it much harder to convince commissioners that he was equally well-placed to talk about the story of the Big Bang, or the experience of being at school.

Britain’s diversity is changing and diversity policies are not keeping up. The experience of fourth-generation descendants of Windrush arrivals will be very different to that of new migrants from North Africa or the Middle East. The mixed-race population will soon be larger than any specific minority ‘group’. Ethnic diversity and class outreach have run mainly on parallel tracks, risking falling into the trap of a ‘competing grievances’ frame of prioritising either minority inclusion or the white working-class, despite the largest proportion of ethnic minority Britons being in social grades C2DE. Bringing ethnicity and class together would ask less what ‘ethnic communities’

want as if they are monolithic groups. Rather it would recognise how differences of cultural view – between the mobile ‘anywheres’ and the rooted ‘somewheres,’ using the terminology of the writer David Goodhart¹⁸ – are reflected across generations, education, class, gender and place within and across minority as well as majority groups.

The approach to diversity has become too static – a parallel project of minority inclusion, rather than one which seeks to cross divides. Yet it won’t be possible to move on from a ‘deficit’ approach to missing diversity while progress in the cultural workforce is so gradual. It is especially glacial in leadership and governance, and progress in the boardroom as much as on the stage and screen may be the key to taking diversity out of its current pigeon-holes. Cultural policymakers are responding to a ‘them and us’ challenge with a ‘they are good for us’ case about the benefits of diversity. Yet ‘they are good for us’ is still a ‘them and us’ case. If crossing divides is to have greater priority, we would need to dig deeper and challenge us all to tell stories of the ‘new us’.

NATIONAL MOMENTS

Broad majorities of the public believe that the arts has an important role to play in marking national moments. What are the future opportunities to do that?

2039-45: THE SECOND WORLD WAR CENTENARY

The success of the First World War centenary surely means that there will now be a major commemorative programme across 2039-45 too – to which arts and culture should again be central. That may seem obvious now. Yet it remained a contested, undecided question, as late as 2010 to 2011, as to whether this last centenary would be marked across the four-year period.

The scope and scale of civic, local and public participation was a distinctively British approach

The Ministry of Defence held the view that “we commemorate the end of wars, not the beginning” and had past precedent on its side. So it is useful to have a different precedent now. While all combatant nations marked the centenary, mainly through solemn ceremonial occasions of state, the scope and scale of civic, local and public participation was a distinctively British approach, resulting directly from the ambition of the cultural programme alongside other local heritage projects. This has set a benchmark for public engagement through culture and heritage which the Second World War centenary should match. So the Government should make sure there is a systematic effort to capture the useful lessons from 14-18 NOW and the artists and partner organisations involved the 2014-18 centenary for those beginning to think about plans for 2039-45.

This will be a different centenary, with different opportunities and challenges. The Second World War holds a much more prominent, ever-present role in our public life and cultural memory. While early research into expectations of 2014-18 found a clear sense of the foundational importance of “the world wars” in shaping our society, that was combined with great difficulty in unpacking the First World War from the second. Curators will

face very different challenges, too. If the issue in 2014-18 was one of making scarce film and audio footage of the First World War accessible to the public, in 2039 it will involve helping practitioners and audiences navigate an enormous deluge of visual material – while also ensuring the collection of hidden histories that will soon be lost.

The Second World War will become more distant from us before its centenary begins. There are tens of thousands of Second World War veterans, now in their nineties, while well over a million people in their eighties have some memory of the war years as children. Across the 2020s and 2030s direct experience of this conflict too will pass from living memory into the realm of history and identity. There are important opportunities for inter-generational contact in the collection of oral histories, which can be informed by strategic thinking about where the gaps are.

The 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019 and of VE Day in 2020 will have a greater public prominence than the 75th anniversary of the Great War armistice in 1993. It offers an important opportunity to consider medium-term strategies, particularly how to sustain the complementary

Poppies: Wave. Paul Cummins and Tom Piper 2016.





Across and In-Between. Suzanne Lacy 2018. Photograph Helen Sloan and Ross Mulhall.

links between heritage and arts practitioners, whose engagement across the 2020s and 2030s can expand the scope of what becomes possible between 2039 and 2045. A much broader proportion of students learn about the Second World War at school, where Hitler and the Holocaust are ubiquitous themes in the curriculum. The ethnic and faith diversity of the First World War armies was a new discovery for many people. The most common response from young people over the last four years was to ask why they had never been taught about this at school. 14-18 NOW productions, such as *Dr Blighty* about the convalescence of Indian soldiers in the Brighton Pavilion, developed educational resources for schools. There is a significant opportunity to rethink curriculum choices and textbooks well ahead of the next centenary, rather than in response to it.

There are significant things we cannot know about the next centenary – including whether the United Kingdom will still exist and which nations might constitute it. The political relationships between these four nations and the continent of Europe may remain in flux, or have been decisively reshaped. That political context will affect how 2039-2045 centenary programmes are coordinated – but may have surprisingly little impact on how to prepare for this opportunity to engage with the

local, social, familial and national connections that have shaped our world.

THE FESTIVAL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The 2022 Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland remains a largely blank piece of paper. We found that social media mockery of the idea as a ‘Festival of Brexit’ does not reflect broader public opinion, nor the distinctly more pragmatic views of the arts sector. Public awareness of the idea is low, but most people, when asked, think it could be a good idea. For artists, scepticism about the motives or framing were trumped by a pragmatic interest in possible resources to put on new work – and to engage local communities in it.

It is easy to identify what could go wrong. The festival will need broad ownership across the nations and regions of the UK, but that will be much harder than for the First World War centenary, when the timescale was fixed and the scale and resonance of the historical events being commemorated trumped political qualms.

A national festival needs buy-in across political tribes. An idea first announced in the Sunday newspapers to open a Conservative Party conference will have to work much harder to command that consensus. There are practical



Letter to an Unknown Soldier at WOMAD 2014. Photograph Gideon Mendel.

challenges too. If a government consumed by Brexit does not put the wheels in motion in good time, this festival could risk becoming a neglected, even orphaned child, associated with a Prime Minister who may no longer be in office.

The Millennium Dome was a public and artistic failure, finding little to say after promising to tell a once-in-a-thousand-years story about this country to the world. But we, in the UK, were never really the audience: it was a conscious act of ‘rebranding’, to tell a story about Britain to the world, without a conversation at home about what might be in it. Initial descriptions of the aims of the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland suggest a similar tension: is the audience at home or abroad, or can it be both? A marketing message for the world about the UK as a place for trade and investment would be better delivered by an advertising agency.

The Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland won't work if it is not a festival owned across the United Kingdom, in the way that 14-18 NOW was. But 2022 would be a particularly difficult year to attempt that. The centenary of Irish partition and civil war, and the founding of Northern Ireland, are a crucial moment for reflection on this complex history. It is not a moment when

festivities would help to cross divides, even if the Irish border were not again central to the politics of Brexit. With many national events in 2022 – the Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and the BBC's centenary – the proposed Festival risks becoming less than the sum of these parts. Rethinking the Festival timetable may be necessary for it to work locally and to meet the public appetite for cultural events that bring us together.

CULTURE AND THE NEXT CORONATION

The most powerful national events in the UK during the next two decades will be the funeral of the Queen, when that sad day comes, and the accession and subsequent Coronation of her successor. The scale, the emotional power and the historic scarcity of such events means that the public's experience and memory of how we mark them could shape our society's understanding of itself for many years to come.

The funeral of a Monarch is naturally a somewhat taboo subject. Her Majesty's Government, the Royal Palaces, the Church, the BBC and the Armed Forces have meticulously rehearsed plans for the 11-day period between the accession of the next Monarch and a State Funeral. These will be

new experiences for us all. Ninety per cent of us have no memory of 1952 or 1953. It was a very different Britain. “*Social media will be a tinderbox,*” wrote Sam Knight in the most detailed public account of the intensive preparations¹⁹. Cultural institutions will have plans for ceasing activities during that period of national mourning.

The spirit should be of celebration without conscription

The subsequent Coronation is a different matter. Our democracy has a constitutional monarchy – because there is broad and sustained public support for it, across the nations of UK. The republican minority have every right to their democratic voice too. There will be street parties, where people want to have them, and other community events. The spirit should be of celebration without conscription, though some media spats and social media sparring about how other people should or should not behave may prove impossible to avoid.

Bringing people together, ensuring everybody is invited to participate in these major national events, in the way that they choose to, and striving to make them a moment of contact across our society would have broad legitimacy. That should be a goal in which many people, enthusiastic or more agnostic about the institution of Monarchy, could see value.

Culture should play its role too. Major royal occasions have been moments for cultural response, for arts and new music, including the solemn, the sublime and the subversive. Think of Cecil Beaton’s portraits of the new Queen, Benjamin Britten’s *Gloriana* among the coronation compositions, or indeed the Sex Pistols shaking up the silver jubilee in 1977. Culture-makers will engage in different ways – a pluralism that could help to reflect the ways in which different nations, regions or generations respond to this shared moment.

If artists want to mark national moments in a way that helps to bridge divisions in British society, and explore the changing society that we have become, it would be appropriate to begin to think quietly about the cultural contribution to such a moment of national reflection and renewal.

PROCESSIONS. Artichoke and Darrell Vydelingum 2018. Photograph Amelia Allen.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

British Future considers that the legacy and lessons of First World War centenary point toward the following recommendations for Government, funders and the arts and heritage sectors.

Set up a UK Town of Culture competition

The UK should hold a UK Town of Culture competition that would take place in the years when there is not a City of Culture. In its first years, towns in all the nations and regions of the UK should benefit. The bidding process should be simple, with applicants submitting a business plan and a video. A ‘culture in the high street’ theme within the competition should require that some programmes are sited in empty retail space. Legacy should also be built into the competition so that there are long-term benefits for the successful towns.

Conduct a ‘fair funding’ review for the arts

Geographical reach was a major success of 14-18 NOW. Outside of such exceptional moments as the First World War centenary, Governments in all four nations of the UK should work together to look at fairer ways of funding the arts, including funding for the arts in schools and local music services. The review should strike a balance between maintaining national institutions, many of which are based in London, and channelling a higher proportion of funding to northern England and to towns. In future, arts organisations that receive public funding should be obliged to show how they are addressing lower participation rates in poorer communities.

Make sure that iconic arts and heritage loans are taken to all parts of the UK

Exhibitions of iconic pieces of art boost local economies and bring communities together, but the default position is for iconic loans to be exhibited in London. The Government should review this policy and funding should be made available to loan iconic pieces of art to galleries and museums across the UK.

Use the 75th anniversary of World War Two to plan for the 2039-2045 commemorations

Building on the legacy and lessons of the First World War centenary, the Government and the arts and heritage sectors should use the 2020 anniversary to consider their plans for the centenary of the Second World War. In particular they should use this opportunity to identify the long-term partnerships and joint projects needed between arts, heritage and education over the next two decades to create new opportunities when the centenary itself arrives.

Consider what we are collecting

Much more thought also needs to be given to collection policies, nationally and locally, so that in future the arts and heritage sector and others has access to the archival sources and objects they need for major anniversaries. If there is no strategic national and local thought given to collection policy, we risk losing hidden histories, such as the testimonies of Polish and Somali combatants who fought for the UK in the Second World War.

Make history more hands-on through a History Education Development Fund

Working with teachers and historians, the governments in all four nations of the UK should set up History Education Development Committees, to review the curriculum and fund projects that aim to rekindle young people’s interest in history. Monies should be made available for those working in schools, adult and further education and the arts and heritage sector, with the aim of making history more hands-on and participative, encouraging children to undertake archaeological digs, inter-generational research and meet war veterans.



Poppies: Weeping Window. Paul Cummins and Tom Piper 2016. Photograph Ellie Kurtz.

Shift the emphasis of diversity policy in the arts

A new ten-year Arts Council England strategy should be taken as an opportunity to rethink arts policy on equality and ethnic diversity. Current aspirations for more diversity on boards should become firmer, timetabled commitments. The arts, culture and heritage sectors should not be content to have less ambitious strategies for change than the expectations now placed on FTSE100 companies after the Parker and Davies Reviews on ethnic and gender diversity. The approach to diversity should be updated, with specific requirements for National Portfolio Organisations to show that some of their work builds common ground across ethnic, faith, class and other social divides.

Appoint a lead minister to oversee national commemorations and cultural festivals

The different government departments and the devolved administrations need to work well together. A lead minister with responsibility for national commemorations and cultural festivals should pay particular attention to the relationship between education and arts and heritage

programmes. This should enable the arts and heritage sectors as well as broader commemorations to add value to work undertaken in schools.

Have longer forward planning times for anniversary commemorations, national festivals and the cultural events associated with iconic loans

When funding programmes, sufficient budgeted time needs to be allocated to cover historical research, as well as school and community engagement.

Postpone the planned 2022 Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and review its aims

The Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland should be postponed from 2022, to help shift its messaging away from Brexit, to avoid coinciding with the centenary of the partition of Ireland, and to allow a lead-time for developing an imaginative cultural programme that is delivered across the breadth of the UK. That could be achieved by 2025. But if this is intended as a once-in-a-generation national moment, with similar resonance to 1951, holding it across the year following the Coronation of the next monarch could maximise its impact.

APPENDICES

CONSULTATION WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Five face-to-face discussions were held with partner organisations and artists in Belfast, Cardiff, Coventry, Edinburgh and London. For those who were unable to attend these meetings, we sent out an online survey. People from the following organisations gave their time to talk to us or fill in our survey, as well as 48 individual artists and freelance administrators.

Akademi
Akram Khan Company
An Lanntair
Artangel
Artes Mundi
Artichoke
Arts Council England
Arts Council Wales
Arts Media People
BBC
British Council
Blast Theory
Bradford Council
Centre for Life Writing Research
CoisCeim Dance Theatre
Coventry City of Culture
Creative Foundation
Cumnock Tryst
Dance Umbrella
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Edinburgh International Festival
Fusion Project
Glasgow Life
Graeae
Hay Festival
Hereford Cathedral
Imagineer Productions
Imperial War Museum

Live Music Now
Liverpool Council
London Sinfonietta
London Symphony Orchestra
Manchester International Festival
National Centre for Writing
National Dance Company Wales
National Lottery Heritage Fund
National Theatre Scotland
National Theatre Wales
Nutmhut
Old Vic
Outdoor Arts UK
Raqs Media Collective
Royal Shakespeare Company
Serious
Shoreditch Town Hall
SlungLow
Southbank Centre
The Story Museum
Sunderland Culture
Swansea Council
Tate
Theatre Orchard
Warwick Arts Centre
Welsh Government
Wildworks
Yorkshire Sculpture Park

NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

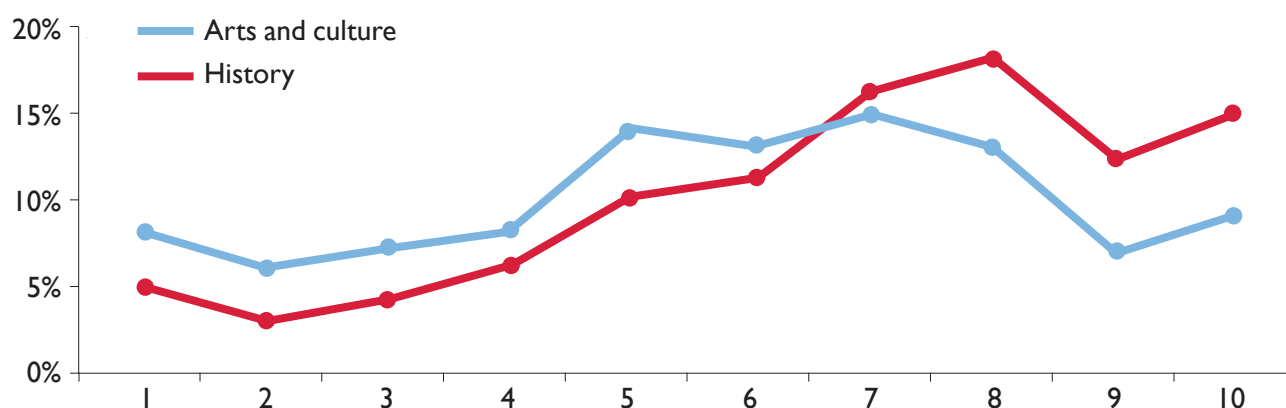
ICM interviewed a sample of 2,260 people in Great Britain online aged 16+ from 15-18 February 2019. In addition to the core sample of 2,000 adults we boosted the samples of 16 and 17 year olds and minority ethnic citizens to provide more detailed findings on these groups.

The topline findings are given below, with the results also broken down by standard demographic, geographic, socio-economic and political (GE 2017 and EU referendum) variables.

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means ‘not at all interested’ and 10 means ‘very interested’, please tell us how interested, if at all, you are in...

- a) Arts and culture: mean score 5.8
- b) History: mean score 6.8

Q1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means ‘not at all interested’ and 10 means ‘very interested’, please tell us how interested, if at all, you are in (a) arts and culture and (b) history



Q2. Thinking back as carefully as you can, when was the last time that you went to...?

	In the last week	Between 1 and 2 weeks ago	Between 2 weeks and 1 month ago	Between 1 and 3 months ago	Between 3 and 6 months ago	Between 6 months and 1 year ago	Between 1 year and 3 years ago	Longer than 3 years ago	Never	Don't know/can't recall
An art gallery	2%	3%	4%	6%	7%	10%	14%	29%	20%	6%
A national museum	1%	2%	4%	6%	10%	11%	18%	33%	9%	6%
A local museum	2%	3%	4%	7%	9%	12%	15%	30%	11%	6%
Hear live music	4%	4%	5%	9%	8%	12%	15%	26%	11%	5%
The theatre	2%	3%	5%	11%	9%	10%	14%	29%	11%	5%
The cinema	7%	7%	12%	14%	12%	10%	11%	20%	4%	3%
Other arts or cultural event	1%	2%	3%	5%	6%	6%	7%	21%	25%	25%

Q3. Feeling that arts and culture is personally relevant. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

I feel that arts and culture in the UK are generally for people like me	49%
I feel that arts and culture in the UK are generally not for people like me	35%
Don't know	16%

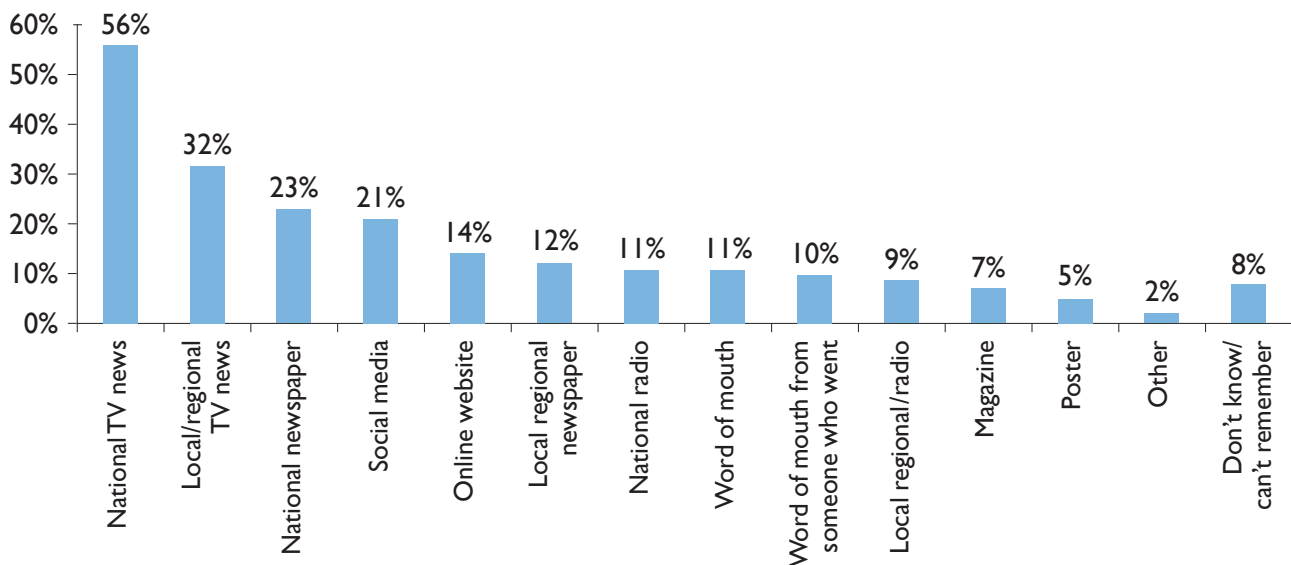
Q4. [The screen shows a selection of images of projects from 14-18 NOW]. These images are a selection of projects from 14-18 NOW. 14-18 NOW was the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary (100th anniversary). Working with arts and heritage partners, 14-18 NOW commissioned new artworks from contemporary artists, musicians, film-makers, designers and performers, inspired by the period 1914-18.

Projects include Danny Boyle's *Pages of the Sea*, Peter Jackson's *They Shall Not Grow Old*, *Wave and Weeping Window* by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper, Jeremy Deller's *We're here because we're here*, *PROCESSIONS* and *LIGHTS OUT*.

Before today, were you aware of this programme of arts events / projects for the First World War centenary?

- Yes, definitely – 26%
- Yes, I think so – 30%
- No, I don't think so – 24%
- No, definitely not – 20%

Q5. [Keep images on screen and ask only those who said yes to questions 4]. Where did you see or hear about this programme of arts events/projects for the First World War centenary? Please select all that apply.



Q6. [Keep images on screen]. As far as you are aware, did any of these arts events / projects for the First World War centenary happen near you?

Yes – 38%

No – 62%

Q7. [Question asked to those who were aware of 14-18 NOW (1,265 respondents)]. Did you personally go to, experience, or watch a First World War centenary arts event?

Yes – 26%

No – 71%

Don't know/can't remember – 4%

Q8. Perceptions of geographic spread. Do you feel that these First World War centenary arts events/projects were...? Please select the answer that comes closest to your view. [Asked to those who were aware of 14-18 NOW (1,265 respondents)]

Spread around the UK	43%
Concentrated in big cities	28%
Concentrated in London	12%
Don't know	17%

Q9. Feeling that the centenary was personally relevant. Based on the images and description and what you knew before today which of the following statements comes closest to your view? [Images kept on screen, question asked of all respondents]

I feel that this programme of arts events/projects for the First World War centenary was for people like me	54%
I feel that this programme of arts events/projects for the First World War centenary was not for people like me	26%
Don't know	20%

Q10. Do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to have an arts programme across the UK to mark the First World War centenary?

A very good idea	49%
Quite a good idea	27%
Neither a good nor bad idea	16%
Quite a bad idea	3%
A very bad idea	2%
Don't know	4%

Q11. [Split sample, showing half the group (1,126) a video montage from 14-18 NOW and half (1,127) no video montage]. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Video V No video NV	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
British society is divided	27%V 32% NV	45%V 42% NV	19%V 17% NV	6%V 5% NV	1%V 1% NV	2%V 2% NV	72%V 74% NV	7%V 6% NV
A shared history can bring people together in the UK	38%V 33% NV	40%V 40% NV	16%V 19% NV	4%V 4% NV	1%V 2% NV	2%V 2% NV	77%V 73% NV	5%V 7% NV
Arts and cultural events can bring people together in the UK	32%V 26% NV	40%V 38% NV	19%V 24% NV	4%V 6% NV	1%V 2% NV	3%V 3% NV	72%V 64% NV	6%V 9% NV
It is important to mark national moments	57%V 52% NV	27%V 28% NV	11%V 14% NV	2%V 2% NV	1%V 2% NV	1%V 2% NV	84%V 80% NV	3%V 4% NV
I feel optimistic about the future of the UK	16%V 16% NV	27%V 25% NV	29%V 25% NV	18%V 25% NV	7%V 8% NV	4%V 3% NV	43%V 41% NV	25%V 32% NV

Note: There is rounding in the above table

Q12. The UK currently has a 'City of Culture' programme, providing funding every 4 years to bring an arts festival to a UK city. Hull was the 2017 City of Culture and in 2021 it will be Coventry. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
Building on the UK 'City of Culture' programme, we should host a similar 'Town of Culture' programme to bring the arts to places outside the big cities.	24%	38%	25%	5%	2%	6%	62%	7%
In the future, when the UK hosts the coronation of a new monarch, there should be a major arts and culture festival across the UK in the first year of their reign to celebrate.	24%	31%	27%	7%	5%	7%	55%	12%

Q13. [Split the sample and give half question A and half question B.]

A) The Prime Minister has proposed a ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ to be held in 2022, which newspapers have described as a ‘Festival of Brexit’. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

B) The Prime Minister has proposed a ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
A ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ is a good idea (A) Festival of Brexit descriptor	24%	34%	26%	6%	4%	7%	58%	10%
A ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ is a good idea (B) No Brexit descriptor	24%	38%	24%	6%	4%	5%	62%	10%
A ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ will bring people together across the UK. (A) Festival of Brexit descriptor	21%	34%	26%	8%	4%	6%	55%	12%
A ‘Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’ will bring people together across the UK. (B) No Brexit descriptor	20%	37%	23%	10%	4%	5%	57%	14%

Q14. Perceived importance of commemorating national moments. Which of the following comes closest to your view? At a time when the UK can feel divided...

It is important that we mark national moments that can bring us together	66%
Celebrating national moments are a distraction from the real problems we face	22%
Don't know	12%

Q15. Thinking about the role of arts and culture in bridging social divisions, which of the following comes closest to your view?

Arts and culture are generally doing a good job of bridging social divisions	24%
Arts and culture generally need to do more to help bridge social divisions	31%
It is generally not the job of arts and culture to try to bridge social divisions	27%
Don't know	18%

**Q16. In the context of the increasing ethnic and faith diversity of British society, which of the following approaches would you prefer to see arts and cultural institutions prioritise?
An approach with...?**

	All UK	White	BME
More emphasis on productions aiming to appeal more to ethnic and faith minorities	12%	10%	23%
More emphasis on productions that reflect diversity but try to appeal across all ethnic groups	46%	45%	50%
Less emphasis on productions that try to reflect the diversity of British society	19%	21%	7%
Don't know	24%	25%	20%

Q17. In the context of the increasing ethnic and faith diversity of British society, which of the following comes closest to your view?

	All UK	White	BME
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to do too little to include people of different ethnic and faith backgrounds	17%	15%	28%
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to get it about right in including people of different ethnic and faith backgrounds	30%	29%	39%
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to focus too much on trying to include people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds	23%	25%	11%
Don't know	30%	31%	22%

Q18. Perceived inclusion in arts and culture by class. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

	All UK	White	BME
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to do too little to include people of all social classes	29%	28%	31%
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to get it about right in including people of all social classes	33%	33%	37%
Arts and culture in the UK have tended to focus too much on trying to include people of all social classes	12%	13%	11%
Don't know	26%	27%	21%

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Understanding the social characteristics of those who took part in 14-18 NOW is essential if we are to know whether the programme brought different groups of people together and hence if the arts might do this more broadly. As Figure 4.1 shows, the ICM research found differences in levels of participation between those of white British ethnicity and minority ethnic populations. There might be a simple relationship between participation and ethnicity. Alternatively, a range of mediating factors such as where people live or their education profiles might lead to these differences. Regression analysis enables us to disentangle these complex relationships and see which factor is most strongly associated with participation in 14-18 NOW.

Attitudes to the arts were associated with attending or watching 14-18 NOW events. Simple bivariate analysis also shows that social grade, gender, ethnicity, settlement type (large city, town and so on) and having children under 18 were the social factors where there was a statistically significant association with going to, experiencing or watching a 14-18 NOW event. But multiple regression analysis shows that when all other mediating factors are taken into account, only social class had a statistically significant association with going to, experiencing or watching a 14-18 NOW event or not.

Although the calculation was based on a relatively small sample of 2,260 people, when all other variables are held constant a one-unit decrease in the measure of social grade (from A to B, for example) is associated with a 6% decrease in likelihood of going to, experiencing or watching a centenary arts event. Significantly, this drop in participation did not apply to those aged 16-24. The figure should also be seen in the context of other research that looks at the impact of social grade on participation in the arts – the *Active Lives* survey, for example. The latter shows a much steeper drop in arts participation across social grades than for the centenary arts programme –

suggesting that 14-18 NOW did engage new audiences.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

FOLKESTONE

This town was selected because of its strong connection with the First World War and because the council has pursued a policy of arts-led regeneration. It was one of the sites for *Pages of the Sea* and eight of the ten participants in the group had taken part in it (though this was not a factor in their recruitment to take part in the group). *Pages of the Sea* had an impact on this group, with a discussion about whether Walter Tull or Wilfred Owen should have been the portrait chosen for Folkestone. Walter Tull, a British army officer and one of the first mixed race professional footballers, was born in Folkestone and there was real pride in his achievement as a ‘son of Folkestone’.

There was real pride in his achievement as a ‘son of Folkestone’

We were told about the legacy of *Pages of the Sea* in the form of offshoot activities in schools and in the community. There was a consensus that this was different from the Folkestone Triennial programme, as it involved a cross-section of the town’s population, whereas much on offer during the Triennial did not engage local people. The discussion also explored culture-led regeneration which the group felt had brought benefits to Folkestone in the form of jobs and regeneration of the high street. However, it was felt that some of the events in the Folkestone Triennial were elitist and that this festival had polarised the local population.

GLASGOW

The participants were aged 16 to 25 and the discussion explored young people's views of 14-18 NOW, as well as their engagement with the arts, history and heritage. We also discussed how future festivals could be made relevant to Scotland. The group had little recollection of 14-18 NOW events, with the Poppies and *They Shall Not Grow Old* the only aspects of the programme that they had seen. A lack of connection with the First World War and reliance on social media to receive news may account for low awareness of the 14-18 NOW programme among this group.

Participants gave their responses to a clip of *They Shall Not Grow Old* and the discussion went on to explore how history lessons could be made more engaging to young people. The group also gave their views about the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. While they welcomed the idea and hoped that the activities would be relevant for young people, they felt that the festival might not be attractive to Scots if it told an overtly London or English story.

LEICESTER

Six of the ten participants in the discussion were aware of events that were part of 14-18 NOW, with this group not having the same level of engagement with the programme as the Folkestone and Sunderland groups. This reflected their broader engagement with the arts and that there were fewer 14-18 NOW events in the East Midlands than in other regions.

They felt that the arts should do more to bring people together

Half of the group were from minority ethnic communities and the discussion explored the role of the arts in helping bridge ethnic and other types of social divides. Participants felt that UK society was very divided, particularly in relation to ethnicity

and social class. They felt that the arts should do more to bring people together, but this was difficult when audiences were largely white and middle class.

The group gave their views on video clips which included excerpts from *Xenos*, Akram Khan's dance production about Indian soldiers, and *Pages of the Sea* at Ayr beach, where Walter Tull's portrait washed into the sea. The four participants of South Asian heritage felt that before the First World War commemorations, younger people in their communities risked losing connection with this aspect of history. The commemorations, including 14-18 NOW, had restored this link as well as raising broader public awareness about the contribution of Indian soldiers in the First World War.

SUNDERLAND

There were high levels of approval for 14-18 NOW from those who took part in the discussion. Everyone had participated in or watched 14-18 NOW events and five of the ten participants had taken part in *Pages of the Sea* on Roker Beach (though this was not a factor in their recruitment to take part in the group). The group was shown clips from the film *Asunder*, commissioned by 14-18 NOW, which explored the city's involvement in the First World War. None of them had heard about the film and the group was very disappointed that they had not been aware of the film.

“We only get the dregs in Sunderland”

All members of this group talked about their own and the city's working class identity. They felt that the arts establishment had neglected the North East and we were told that “*We only get the dregs in Sunderland*”.

The EU referendum had polarised Sunderland, which voted Leave, with these divisions still not healed in the city. We discussed the role of the arts in bridging social divisions, with the group sceptical about whether this was possible, particularly in times of recession.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

British Future would like to thank the artists and partner organisations who gave up their time to talk to us. We hope they find our report useful. A big thank you to Eleanor Snooks of British Future for her transcription and work on the survey dataset. We are also grateful to DJS Research, who recruited the four focus groups and Medwen Roberts from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre who provided us with some of the evaluation data. Finally, British Future would like to thank 14-18 NOW, particularly Jenny Waldman, Nigel Hinds, Claire Eva and Pak Ling Wan whose help was invaluable.

ABOUT BRITISH FUTURE AND THIS REPORT

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and of British Future, which retains editorial control. They are independent of 14-18 NOW, which funded this piece of work.

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank seeking to involve people in an open conversation which addresses people's hopes and fears about identity and integration, migration and opportunity, so that we feel confident about Britain's Future.

We want to engage those who are anxious about cultural identity and economic opportunity in Britain today, as well as those who already feel

confident about our society, so that we can together identify workable solutions to make Britain the country we want to live in.

In 2013, British Future published *Do mention the war: Will 1914 matter in 2014?* which explored public attitudes to the First World War and the centenary commemorations, including its role in contemporary debates about national identity and integration. In partnership with the BBC, DCMS, Imperial War Museum and Commonwealth War Graves Commission, British Future tracked public awareness of and attitudes to the First World War centenary from 2014 to 2018, with research conducted in December 2014, 2016 and after the centenary of the Armistice in 2018.

To find out more about British Future visit our website www.britishfuture.org

ABOUT 14-18 NOW

14-18 NOW was a five-year programme of extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War. Working with partners all across the UK, we commissioned new artworks from leading contemporary artists, musicians, designers and performers, inspired by the period 1914-18.

These new artworks brought stories of the First World War to life, offering fresh perspectives and connecting a global conflict from 100 years ago with our world today.

14-18-NOW
WW1 CENTENARY ART COMMISSIONS

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Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



NOTES & REFERENCES

¹ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2019) *The Centenary of the First World War*, London DDCMS Publications.

² Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM) (2015) *14-18 NOW Evaluation, December 2014 Report*, Manchester: MHM.

³ Those scoring 1-3 on a 1 to 10 scale about personal interest in history or the arts in the ICM research for British Future, 2019.

⁴ Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM) (2015) *14-18 NOW Evaluation, December 2014 Report*, Manchester: MHM.

⁵ YouGov polling for Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM) in MHM (2019) *14-18 NOW 2018 Season Evaluation Report*, Manchester: MHM.

⁶ ICM research with 2,260 GB persons aged 16+, 15-18 February 2019.

⁷ This figure is consistent with the Government's *Taking Part Survey* and British Future's 2018 World War One centenary tracker, which suggested that 13% of UK adults went to, experienced or watched the centenary arts programme.

⁸ Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM) (2019) *14-18 NOW 2018 Season Evaluation Report*, Manchester: MHM

⁹ Arts Council England *Active Lives Survey 2015-2017* dataset.

¹⁰ The most recent *Active Lives Survey* suggests that those in higher social grades were 65% more likely to have attended an artistic event in the last 12 months, but for 14-18 NOW this difference in participation between the two groups was 33%.

¹¹ ICM polling for British Future, 2019.

¹² YouGov research for British Future's World War One centenary tracker showed that in 2014, just 44% of the adult population knew that more than 1,000 Indian soldiers had fought in World War One; by 2018 this was 71%.

¹³ Kushner, T. and Knox, K (1999) *Refugees in an age of genocide*, London: Frank Cass.

¹⁴ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2017) *Taking Part Survey: Focus on Heritage*, London: DDCMS.

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