

<b>Institution:</b> Lancaster University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28, History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Bringing new audiences to inclusive, local commemorations of World War One		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012 to 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Ian Gregory	Professor	September 2006 to present
Michael Hughes	Professor	August 2013 to present
Corinna Peniston-Bird	Senior Lecturer	September 2000 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> January 2014 to December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Researchers at Lancaster University have expanded the traditional focus on fallen combatants in World War One by shaping understandings of inclusivity and locality amongst a range of local constituencies. They developed a new and distinctive kind of commemoration marking the WWI centenary by making their research on bereaved households, civilian casualties and conscientious objectors accessible to new audiences, generating impacts on heritage, culture, creativity, participation, and learning. Their work inspired communities to install two new war memorials, and the research has underpinned the creation of commemorative and educational digital resources. Enriched curricula have enabled many locally and regionally maintained schools to engage with Lancaster's more inclusive commemoration. Impacts on heritage policy have been consolidated through research-informed collaborations with local authorities, and more than 25 UK localities and 6 EU partners have now taken inspiration from Lancaster's approach to highlighting inclusive local experiences in the processes of remembrance.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Peniston-Bird's longstanding oral history research illuminates the wartime experiences of broad constituencies including women and men who did not serve. It uncovers collective notions of patriotism, bridging military and civilian experiences, alongside views typical of particular social groups. The work compares patterns found for both world wars. Her study of twentieth-century war memorials shows how representations of mourning have focused on combatants, invariably marginalising the home front and civilian losses, an imbalance highlighted by exploring how bereaved relatives, friends, and neighbours saw fit to express their grief [R1, R2, R3]. Hughes has investigated conscientious objection to WWI, identifying significant geographical variation in levels of objection even between nearby towns. He argues that the level of objection depended on the spread of religious dissent, political radicalism, and the local presence of influential regiments. By closely studying Lancashire's conscientious objectors, he throws new light on their treatment. His conclusion is that to understand the patchwork of wartime sentiments, it is essential to undertake 'granular studies' of local communities [R4].</p> <p>In 2014, Peniston-Bird and Gregory began to chart the geographies of death and bereavement by extracting information from national and local listings to map war losses in Lancaster and in select North-Western communities [G1]. The results keenly show the effect of wartime attrition on a small city such as Lancaster, whose entire population in 1914 numbered about 40,000, and where, on average, a serviceman was killed almost every day [R5]. However, while certain battles, notably the Battle of the Somme, dominate national memorialisation, the research demonstrates how other encounters could have a devastating impact on a local community: the Second Battle of Ypres (1915) was tragically felt in Lancaster, home to the King's Own Royal Regiment. Peniston-Bird and Gregory explain how the disjunction between national commemoration and local loss affected survivors and exacerbated notions of marginalisation, shaping how bereaved families understood their history. In doing so, they analyse testimonies from the Elizabeth Roberts Working Class Oral History Archive, held by Lancaster's Regional Heritage Centre, alongside new testimonies collected by local volunteers. The visualisation methods used to identify and analyse the geographical spread of bereaved households were developed by Gregory, supported by an EPSRC funded project [R5, R6, G2].</p>		

Collectively, the research shows that while 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare was a national and international affair, contemporaneous experience and remembrance must be assessed in its local context. The micro-historical dimension reflects broad themes, while showing important divergences. The research highlights the role of civilians in war, exposing stereotypes, and offering critical insights for exploring gendered patterns of commemoration. The methodological diversity, collaborative ethos and research insights demonstrated here play a key role in consultancy and community engagement.

### 3. References to the research

[R1] C.M. Peniston-Bird, “‘All in it together’ and ‘backs to the wall’: relating patriotism and the people’s war in the 21st century”, *Oral History* 40 (2012), 69–80; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41806358>. *Peer-reviewed*.

[R2] C.M. Peniston-Bird, ‘The grieving male in memorialization: monuments of discretion’ *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 8 (2015), 41–56, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1179/1752628014Y.0000000017>. *Peer-reviewed*.

[R3] C.M. Peniston-Bird, ‘Commemorating invisible men: reserved occupations in bronze and stone’ in L. Robb and J. Pattinson eds., *Men, masculinities and male culture in the Second World War* (2018), 189–214, DOI: [10.1057/978-1-349-95290-8\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95290-8_9). *Peer-reviewed*. ‘Intellectually exciting’, *English Historical Review*, 19:242 (December 2019), 522 downloads by November 2020.

[R4] M. J. Hughes, ‘A Patchwork of dissent: conscientious objectors in Lancashire during the First World War’ In: *Local Historian* 47:4 (2017), 283–96. <https://www.balh.org.uk/publication-tlh-the-local-historian-volume-47-number-4-october-2017>. *Peer-reviewed*.

[R5] I.N. Gregory and C.M. Peniston-Bird, ‘The Second Battle of Ypres and a northern English town: digital humanities and the First World War’, in I.N. Gregory, D. DeBats and D. Lafreniere eds. *Routledge companion to spatial history* (London: Routledge History Handbooks, 2018), 567–86. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315099781>. *Peer-reviewed*.

[R6] T.V. Cheverst and I. Gregory, ‘LoMAK: a framework for generating locative media apps from KML files’, *Engineering Interactive Computer Systems* 14 (2015), 211–16, major output from the EPSRC-funded SHARC project, DOI: [10.1145/2607023.2610270](https://doi.org/10.1145/2607023.2610270). *Peer-reviewed*.

#### Peer-reviewed research grants:

[G1] Gregory (PI), *Spatial Humanities: Texts, GIS, Places*, ERC Ref: ERC-2011-StG\_20101124 (2012-2016), FP7/2007-2013, EUR1.46 million.

[G2] Gregory (Co-I), *The SHARC Project: Investigating technology support for the shared curation of local history in a rural community*, EPSRC EP/K015850/1 (2013-2017), GBP284,378.

### 4. Details of the impact

The overarching aim of this case study has been to use the research to enrich and deepen local people’s understanding of how WWI affected their communities and to assist them in memorialising inclusively. Lancaster’s approach has been based around a combination of: in-depth research on war and memorialisation; close involvement with a full range of local partners from local government, the heritage sector, community groups, the media, schools, and the general public; and the innovative use of technology including interactive websites, mobile apps, and a MOOC. The success of this approach has enabled Lancaster to expand its reach to new localities in the region, as well as nationally and internationally.

#### Transforming commemoration of WWI in the community

Peniston-Bird, Hughes, and Gregory established an array of collaborations with local organisations and heritage venues focused on WW1 centenaries. Their research activities and findings enabled events to go beyond the traditional honouring of male military casualties. In April 2014, Hughes drew on research from [R4] to open an exhibition on conscientious objectors from Lancashire and neighbouring counties at Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism in Cheshire. This was viewed by approximately 5,000 visitors, contributing to a rise of 20% in annual visitor numbers to this ‘small rural hamlet’ site. Intended to run for 1 year, the exhibition was displayed for 4 years due to ‘overwhelming interest’, as the curator testifies. Viewers appreciated the ‘fascinating temporary exhibit about WWI that included the experience ... of conscientious objectors’ and learned about the ‘context of many of the issues raised, which added greatly to our enjoyment’ [S1]. Between May and November 2017, the ‘Boomtown’ exhibition at Lancaster City Museum, co-created with Peniston-Bird, explored Lancaster and

Morecambe's home and battle fronts. The exhibition drew on the team's research [R1-3, R5] and attracted 36,549 visitors as reported by the City Museum. These exhibitions show outstanding reach for two municipalities whose combined population totals 95,000 and which are not prime tourist destinations. A creative follow-up, 'Blasted', was dedicated to a munitions factory explosion in Morecambe, where 10 civilian workers perished in 1917. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and developed by Peniston-Bird with schools and the local community, it culminated in 2 live performances at Lancaster City Museum with over 3,000 viewers over two nights (2017). Citizens clearly valued these initiatives which, as one 'Boomtown' viewer noted, enabled them to *'understand Lancaster and Morecambe's role in WWI'*. Another said: *'This exhibition dispelled a lot of myths I had grown with over many years'*. And another, referring to the explosion, *'I have lived in Lancaster all my life and did not know of this disaster'* [S1].

To deepen and localise understanding of WWI heritage, Peniston-Bird devised a pop-up exhibition documenting the explosion. This display toured 6 community and shopping locations in Lancaster and Morecambe, where it was seen by 4,632 viewers before travelling to 3 other places in the North West and southern Scotland. In Greater Manchester, the Fire Service Museum manager described *'Plenty of amazed expressions and "I never knew that"'*. This motivated him to 'tweak somewhat' his 'own exhibition'. In Easttriggs, one of 795 viewers stated: *'It changed my way of thinking about people who worked in the munitions and brought it home what my mother went through'*. Another said: *'I never knew the women done as much'* [S1]. Collaboration with local organisations and the use of innovative displays thus changed understandings of WWI across the North West and were hugely appreciated in Lancaster.

In 2013, Lancaster City Council established the 'World War One Centenary Network' which was closely advised by Peniston-Bird and informed by UoA research. Under her leadership and encouragement, and as a response to the popularity of commemorative events, the Network had doubled in size by 2018 to include 40 local government, education, and heritage sector partners (including faith and military organisations and the Duchy of Lancaster). The Council's Marketing and Tourism officer explained that the network *"had a transformative impact on the city and region's commemoration effort"* and thanked Peniston-Bird for her *"vision of collaboration and knowledge sharing"*, without which the Network's *"large-scale heritage and cultural project would have been unthinkable"* [S2].

One of the Network's outcomes was a walking-trail app and leaflet, funded by Lancaster City Council and EPSRC [G2, R6], and distributed through local tourism centres. These take users to 15 sites of 'military and civilian significance', with findings and testimonies drawn from the team's research and linked to local locations [R4, R5]. The leaflet proved so popular that it was reissued; to date, 6,000 copies have been used. Sites and testimonies also featured in the final session of a free online course (MOOC), co-created by Peniston-Bird and two Network partners, the Regional Heritage Centre and the Duchy of Lancaster. The MOOC has engaged 8,350 individuals with the research, across 128 countries: users praised this 'historical delving' into the 'lives and stories of everyday people.' The course won a 'Customer Service Excellence award' in 2019, and was nominated by the British Universities Film & Video Council for the 'Learning on Screen' award [S3].

A further request from a Network partner, Lancaster Military Heritage Group, saw Gregory and Peniston-Bird launch an additional commemorative resource in 2016: an interactive website, entitled 'Streets of Mourning', grounded in their research and funded by HLF [R5]. The website mapped the home addresses of WWI casualties, visualising the devastating effect on the community of those deaths. Accompanying oral history narratives came from the local Oral History archive held at the Regional Heritage Centre (Lancaster University) or were newly collected by local volunteers under Peniston-Bird's guidance. To further engage audiences with the research, 5 story-gathering days in 2016 drew 7,262 participants to public events at Lancaster Castle (Armed Forces Day), Campus in the City (Lancaster University's pop-up community engagement programme in central Lancaster) and at Lancaster University (follow-up interviews on campus). The number of participants equalled approximately 15% of Lancaster's population. The HLF's report commended this project for creating heritage 'learning, curiosity, awareness and enjoyment'. In 2017, 5,000 members of the general public explored the 'Streets of Mourning' website over 3 days and the following year, the website was employed by the City

Council to engage citizens once more during Armistice Day commemorations. This included displaying excerpts from the research and findings in home, pub, and shop windows. *'It's amazing you walk down that street many times not knowing its story'*, said one Lancastrian. *'This really brings it home'*, said another [S4].

To further memorialise local experience, memorabilia connected with the testimonies were collected in Lancaster, Preston, and Barrow-in-Furness through a project led by the Regional Heritage Centre, advised by Peniston-Bird. The Oral History archive was also digitised. As a direct knock-on effect, the local charity, Mirador Art, invited artistic responses inspired by the oral histories. In 2018, Mirador reported to HLF 69 'creative impacts' linked to the oral testimonies, including installations, live performances, poetry, and a film which won the AHRC Research in Film Award (2018). These events drew 11,612 and 59,000 through online reach [S5].

The inclusive and popular approach to commemoration raised attention to heritage in the local media. In 2016 and 2017, Peniston-Bird was twice invited to appear on *North West Tonight* (reaching an audience of approximately 1 million) and gave 5 interviews on Lancaster's local radio station, The Bay Radio FM. She also gave 4 interviews on BBC Radio Lancashire (average listeners 200,000) and had 17 local press interviews and articles (*Lancaster Guardian*, 11,000 print copies per week), *Lancashire Evening Post* (12,000 print copies per day) and 18,970 combined total daily online views) [S6].

To ensure enduring impact, the research team partnered with the Curator of the King's Own Royal Regiment museum to write a popular history of Lancaster in WWI 'Lancaster: remembering 1914–18, Great War Britain' (Stroud: History Press, 2017), highlighting the civilian dimension and drawing on the research. Described as 'excellent', based on 'serious research' by readers, 500 copies were purchased in the first 15 months after publication. It became a local bestseller, with the local manager of Waterstone's store reporting *"it sold more copies than Jamie Oliver's cookbook"* at the Lancaster branch [S7].

#### **Enabling children to engage with and contribute to inclusive commemoration of WWI**

To achieve sustained impact, the researchers also engaged with schools. In 2014, Peniston-Bird was invited to deliver a WWI workshop at Moorside Primary School (Lancaster), introducing pupils to the untold stories of local experiences. By 2018, all Year 6 pupils in the school were studying the local and inclusive dimensions of WWI with 'immense enthusiasm', and this continues.

Lancashire Heritage Learning Team, an educational support team servicing North-West schools, signed a formal agreement with Lancaster University in 2018, enabling approximately 60,000 children annually to engage with the research by enriching curricula with local and inclusive histories of WWI at all key-stage levels. New educational resources were based on primary sources relating to [R4, R5], drawn from research insights within [R1-3]. Peniston-Bird has delivered workshops for 41 teachers across the North-West [S8], one primary-school head teacher reporting how teachers found the materials 'accessible' and 'hugely helpful' in learning about WWI and women and men on the home front. The pupils were 'inspired' about 'bringing back to life' local and family history. In Lancaster, the programme continues to be used by approximately 60% of primary schools and 75% of secondary schools. Primary schoolchildren were so moved by the source materials studied that in 2016 they petitioned the local MP for more inclusive memorialisation and as a result, the local parish authority erected a new memorial in 2017 to the 10 civilians killed in the 1917 explosion on the former munitions factory site. Since 2018, municipal Remembrance Day events have included pupils reading the victims' names and laying clay poppies made in art classes.

In 2014, Westfield War Memorial Village, built in Lancaster in 1919 to house disabled veterans, invited Peniston-Bird to co-develop a school outreach programme based on her research. Since then, up to 8 classes have visited each year. As a result of this educational collaboration, the Village's centenary was marked by the unveiling of a new memorial: to the men, women and children who supported the welfare of the ex-service community. Over 80% of Village residents surveyed agreed that educational exploration of its history is 'very important' [S10]. In 2017 Peniston-Bird and Gregory established a summer school for Year 12 pupils, 'Memorials of WWI and Digital Skills', with an intake of 15 students per year from widening participation target-groups around the UK. Student feedback demonstrates that the course transformed their views



and encouraged them to express how “*memorials mean more than just remembering soldiers who died in war*” and bring to the fore ‘unrepresented groups’ [S11]. Enriched local education, has thus enhanced learning and creativity, and the processes of commemoration [S9].

### **Enabling new initiatives in culture, learning and heritage policy, to ensure longevity of WW1 commemoration**

When a new interface of ‘Streets of Mourning’ was launched in 2019, requests from Chorley and Galgate led the researchers to enable other towns to map their communities’ losses and share insights. By 2020, 25 UK localities had registered with the project’s corresponding website entitled ‘Mapping Loss’, including 5 cities and towns in Lancashire and Greater Manchester alongside towns and villages as far afield as Hampshire and Norfolk, all ‘very interested’ to join Lancaster, and to ‘be a part of your project’.

In 2019, the education charity Global Link (which recruited Peniston-Bird as an advisor) initiated a collaboration entitled ‘Learning from the Past (so we are not Condemned to Repeat it)’, funded by Erasmus. By the end of 2020, the project had recruited 350 schoolchildren, girl guides, and adult volunteers across Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia to document local case studies of inclusive commemoration, from WWI to WWII. National teams reported new understandings of heritage, with the Romanians stating, ‘*it opened a completely new field for us ... the community and the region learned a lot about the period*’ and the Slovenians concluding that: ‘*our local history is quite colorful and not all that black as it was presented to us by local authorities and media through our lives*’. Subsequently, Polish volunteers initiated an Erasmus funded follow-up project, with Peniston-Bird as academic advisor, to ensure future engagement with heritage through ‘Sharing learning from the past’ [S12].

As a result of the successes of the Centenary Network, in 2019, Lancaster City Council took the decision to give the Network a permanent status. It was renamed ‘Lancaster Heritage Network’ and its remit was broadened to include ‘all heritage activity in Lancaster and the surrounding area’. Cooperation with Lancaster University and research-informed historical input were ensured by Peniston-Bird’s continued involvement as the Network’s academic advisor. One of the Network’s missions is internationalisation, which benefited from broad commemoration of the local effects of war through the charity Global Link, as described above [S3]. In July 2019, the research-driven, inclusive, and highly popular commemoration of WWI was emphasised by Lancaster City Council within its bid for Historic England’s *High Street Heritage Action Zone* programme. The bid, for GBP5.75 million, was approved at the first stage in December 2019, and was confirmed as successful in 2020 [S2].

The research has enabled individuals, communities, and organisations to memorialise the devastating effects of modern war and, through this, to connect to an inclusive history. Outstanding engagement with local constituencies has paved the way to broader exchanges among UK communities and European partners, who follow Lancaster in fostering a different commemoration of the devastating effects of war.

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- [S1] Exhibitions and events: figures, audience feedback, and reports (2014-2020)
- [S2] Testimonial from Lancaster City Council (2020); [approved heritage funding](#) (2020)
- [S3] [The Great War Trail App](#); ‘[On the War Path – WWI](#)’; [press release](#); MOOC data (2018-19)
- [S4] [Streets of Mourning](#); evidence and reports of HLF grant, (FW-14-03372), GBP9,100
- [S5] [Mirador](#) report and figures (2018); HLF and AHRC grant reports (2018)
- [S6] Overview of media coverage between 2014 and 2020 (full report available on request)
- [S7] Testimonial from the Manager of the Lancaster branch of Waterstone’s (2017)
- [S8] Testimonials from Barnacre (2020) and Moorside Primary Schools (2020); Lancashire Heritage Learning Team formal agreement with LU (2018)
- [S9] Evidence of school children’s memorialisation, Council/Parish events, and new monument
- [S10] Westfield Memorial Village: evidence of educational memorialisation and new monument
- [S11] Evidence of summer school, ‘Memorials of WWI and Digital Skills’ (2017–20)
- [S12] Learning from the Past: [Facebook](#) page, reports and grants (including GBP82,787), Global Link; Erasmus+ KA1, Learning Mobility programme GBP232,516; Polish National Agency