

Brent Museum and Brent Archives: Exhibitions and Projects 2014

The Lion Roars: The World in Wembley

Exhibition ran from 24 April -31 July 2014 at Brent Civic Centre



This exhibition explored the legacy of the British Empire Exhibition which brought 27 million visitors to Wembley and put the area on the world stage.

The British Empire Exhibition, held from 1924-25 in Wembley was the biggest public event of its kind in the world.

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Exhibition many events were held alongside the exhibition including

a screening of the King's Speech, poetry workshops with award winning author and poet Malika Booker, 1920s fashion talk from Jessica Proudman from the National Theatre, local history walks from Philip Grant from the Wembley History Society and a talk about the British Empire Exhibition from Professor Denis Judd. A competition was also run to design your own British Empire Exhibition Stamp.



Brent Remembers: the Digital War Memorial Project

Spring Summer 2014



Libraries and archives across England have been working with local communities and national partners on a Digital War Memorial.

Brent Museum and Archives' utilised the borough's rich and diverse collections to stimulate reflection and discussion; provide the starting point for deeper engagement; and inspire artistic interpretation. Brent Remembers is one of the first ten projects to be shared on the national Digital War Memorial: www.digitalwarmemorial.com



Poets Malika Booker and Nick Makoha, actor Andy Daniel and heritage professional Jo Sunderland-Bowe drew inspiration from Brent's objects, photos and documents about the First World War to develop creative workshops for Brent's schools, community groups and residents. The resulting [video](#), poems and creative writing are available through the [Digital War Memorial website](#).

Brent Remembers is part of a national project led by the [Society of Chief Librarians](#) which was awarded £196,110 from the National Lottery supported Grants for the arts Libraries fund through Arts Council England.



Northwest London Somali Project



Exhibition ran from August- October 2014 at Brent Civic Centre



The Somali Advice and Forum of Information (SAAFI) received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to work in partnership with LIFT, Brent Museum and Archives and a team of volunteers to deliver the Northwest London Somali Project.

We captured the lives and the experience of the Somali community in Brent in the form of oral history and photography.

The project trained young people to conduct oral history

interviews to:

- discover the experience of moving to or growing up in Brent
- discuss what it means to be part of the Somali and Brent communities
- develop understanding between generations of Somali people and throughout the wider Brent community.

Abdi was born in Burao in Somaliland in 1966. When he was 21 he was given a scholarship to study in Russia. While he was away studying, civil war broke out and he was unable to return home. He came to the UK, where he found life very difficult at first. He has worked in security, as a Council Officer, driving minicabs and now works part time with a Somali TV station. He has two daughters living with him in Brent. [Hear an extract of Abdi's story](#)

Councillor Abdifatah was born in Burao in 1966. He left Somalia in 1989, during the civil war, travelling first to Saudi Arabia and arrived in the UK in 1990. He came alone and did not know anyone here, spending his first few months in East London before moving to

Brent. He became a leader in his community, started serving as a Brent Councillor in 2010 and was re-elected in 2014. [Hear an extract of Councillor Abdifatah story](#)

Amran was born in Hargeisa in 1954. She worked in the Gulf in the late 1970s and early 1980s and, following the civil war in Somalia, moved to Finland in 1990. She stayed in Finland for 17 years, working extensively with the Somali and other communities in that country and received awards for her work. She has kept up her voluntary work in Brent and is currently employed as Community Engagement Officer for the Royal Borough of Greenwich. [Hear an extract of Amran's story](#)

Asha was born in Aden, Yemen but her family are from Somaliland. She came to the UK in 1991, settling first in Haringey. She has live in Brent since 2006. She runs a clothes shop on Wembley High Road. [Hear an extract of Asha's story](#)

Councillor Harbi Farah has lived in Brent for 18 years. Born in Mogadishu, he came alone as a young man in 1992. He manages a charity called Help Somalia Foundation, which delivers services to Brent residents, and was elected to the Council in 2014. [Hear an extract of Councillor Harbi Farah story](#)

Hussein is 47 years old and came to the UK 23 years ago. He has lived in the Brent and Harrow areas most of his life. When he first came to the UK he did not know many people but now feels settled in Brent: he lives here, works here and knows the people. [Hear an extract of Hussein's story](#)

Hussein is 71 years old. He comes from a small village in Somaliland. He trained as a civil engineer in the USA and came to the UK in 1991 via Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. He runs the Red Sea Community Programme, which provides sport and cultural activities, together with advice, information and support for Somali refugees. [Hear an extract of Hussein's story](#)

Khadar was born in Somaliland in Hargeisa in August 1965. He originally came to the UK to study civil engineering, following his mother, father and brother, who arrived before him. Prior to that, he spent 14 years working in The Netherlands. When he first came to the UK he was working for a Dutch bank. Now he is a drummer and following a family tradition: his mother has been a singer for over 40 years. He has two children in the UK with him, both currently at university: his daughter is studying medicine and his son computer engineering. [Hear an extract of Khadar's story](#)

Mariam was born in Djibouti and travelled extensively before settling in the UK with her British-French husband. [Hear an extract of Mariam's story](#)

Mohamed was born in Somalia and is currently the Chairman of the charity Brent Somali Community Roots. He was born in 1970 in Mogadishu and came to London in 2001. He speaks four languages: Dutch, Italian, English and Somali. [Hear an extract of Mohamed's story](#)

Lights Out

Monday 4 August 2014



Between 10pm and 11pm on 4 August 2014, the whole country was encouraged to turn off their lights, leaving on a single light for a shared moment of reflection.

This lights out event marked the exact point, 100 years ago, that Britain declared war on Germany, ushering in one of the darkest periods of our history.

As the moment approached, the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey made the famous remark "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our life-time".

Iconic buildings and landmarks such as Blackpool Illuminations, the Houses of Parliament, Eden Project, the Imperial War Museums and Tower Bridge turned off their lights. Brent Council participated by turning off all non-essential lights in Brent Civic Centre.

Victoria Cross Plaque: Charles Garforth

Saturday 23 August 2014



Four hundred commemorative paving stones will be laid all over the country throughout the Centenary to commemorate recipients of the Victoria Cross during the First World War.

Brent was one of the first places to lay one of these stones, commemorating Charles Ernest Garforth who on 23 August 1914 at Harmingnies, France, volunteered to cut wire while under fire, which enabled his squadron to escape.

We gathered in Willesden Green to unveil the commemorative paving stone to Charles Ernest Garforth, who was born in Willesden Green. **Penny Mordaunt, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government** said a few words and we were delighted to welcome Charles Garforth's descendants to the event.

Brent Remembers: Five Lives

Autumn 2014 to 24 March 2015



This in depth exhibition looked into the lives of five Brent residents using the unique collections held by Brent Museum and Archives.

The exhibition remembered the contribution of Charles Garforth, Edith Knight, Charles Bowen, Mabel Comben and Charles Pinkham to the First World War.

Redevelopment of Brent Museum

2014



The Heritage Team at Brent Museum and Archives worked hard throughout 2014 to develop the new displays and interpretation for the new museum to be based at The Library at Willesden Green.

They also took the opportunity to digitise and catalogue parts of the collection to increase access. This includes the oil paintings and oral histories.
