



MEET THE *WE WERE THERE TOO* NORTH WEST TEAM

Thanks to Heritage Lottery funding, [JLGB](#) has taken on the mantle of the *British Jews in the First World War*, and is expanding the project into the North West of England.

The new project team is now fully operational and hard at work, based at the JLGB's North West office in Whitefield Synagogue's Campus on Park Lane, Whitefield.

Rodney Ross, Project Manager

Nicki Davis, Project Administrator

Charlotte Clare, Project Researcher

The North West team is supported by Alan Fell, previously Project Director, *London Jews in the First World War*, now Senior Project Consultant, and Paula Kitching, previously Project Manager, *London Jews in the First World War*, now Project Consultant Historian. The North West team is also supported by the JLGB National Headquarters, based in London.

British Jews in The First World War - We Were There Too launched in November in the North West, together with an updated and improved website (www.jewsfww.uk) which now displays a range of regional maps pinpointing areas of interest, and the locations where the personal records of individuals can be found.

Over 160 people of all ages attended launch events in Manchester and Liverpool.



Manchester Launch at King David High School

MANCHESTER LAUNCH

Hosted by King David High School, nearly 100 people attended the launch of ***British Jews in the North West - We Were There Too***. Notable VIPs who attended included the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, Dr Robina Shah MBE DL JP, the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Warren Smith LL, plus the Mayors of Manchester, Bury, Trafford and Stockport. Highlights of the evening included the youngest participant of both launch events Natasha Britstone, aged 10, reading Siegfried Sassoon's haunting poem 'Does it Matter', and Robert Eden, grandson of Jack White VC, who read out his grandfather's citation.

Speaking afterwards, Robert remarked that he isn't asked all that often to read the citation, but when he does, "it's like opening a jewellery box and seeing something wonderful."



Robert Eden reading his grandfather's citation (left) Jack White VC and his gravestone in Blackley Cemetery (right)

LIVERPOOL LAUNCH

Held in the atmospheric Grade I listed Princes Road Synagogue, the launch of ***We Were There Too*** was attended by many civic, military and religious leaders, as well as members of the Liverpool community, including Colonel Martin Amlot, a former High Sheriff of Merseyside and commanding officer of 5/8 Battalion, King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool). Mr Amlot said: "the event was most informative and educational. I was amazed at the disproportionately high number of Jews who volunteered to serve this country. This is a story that must be told."

For more information and photos from these events, please [click here](#).



Members of the Liverpool JLGB provided a Guard of Honour for the attending dignitaries

JSCN - JEWISH SMALL COMMUNITIES NETWORK

An integral feature of *We Were There Too* in the North West will be working very closely with Ed Horwich, the Director of the JSCN (the [Jewish Small Communities Network](#)). *We Were There Too* will be reaching out to Blackpool, St Annes and Southport and to even smaller communities where we believe more stories can be found in archives where Jewish Communities settled at the beginning of the 20th century.

Towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign, Britain's Jews were led by the Sephardi Community. They had re-established Jewish life in this country in 1656, becoming part of the fabric of society as shippers and merchants, and therefore fairly prosperous. They were followed by Ashkenazi Jews from Germany, Holland and France, meaning by 1881 the Jewish community numbered approximately 60,000. 'The Great Migration' from Russia and Poland that started in 1880 greatly increased this, and by 1914 the number of Jews in Britain rose to nearer 300,000.

The Jewish population clustered around either ports of entry, such as Newcastle, Hull and Liverpool, or the next economic centre, most notably the seat of the industrial revolution, Manchester. Communities also formed in towns and cities in surrounding Lancashire; such as Preston, Blackburn and Lancaster, as well as Blackpool and St. Annes along the coast; all of which were home to many Jewish men who enlisted and fought in the First World War.

The earlier Ashkenazi community had already spread across the country as travelling salesmen. Where they prospered they gravitated, like the rest of society, to gentrified towns like Southport.

Jewish communities could be found in every part of the country, and all over the North West, at the outbreak of war in 1914. Many of these communities are now gone, but we aim to keep their memory and the great contributions they made to the war effort and British Society alive, by telling their stories through the *We Were There Too* project.



JSCN

CHARLOTTE CLARE - PROJECT RESEARCHER *WE WERE THERE TOO*

As a non-Jewish History graduate and born and bred Mancunian, working on the *We Were There Too* project has given me a real insight into a community's history that I may have otherwise never known anything about. Through my research I discovered the story of a young woman named Ethel Hassan, who, like many British women, wished to do her bit for the war effort. She therefore volunteered as a Red Cross nurse at Fairview Military Hospital in Fallowfield, Manchester in November 1914, at the age of 22. I hope to uncover many more inspiring stories like Ethel's which otherwise may have been forgotten or lost as I continue researching the lives of North West Jews during the First World War.



Ethel Hassan, Red Cross Nurse in the First World War

THE MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM

Opened in 1984, The Manchester Jewish Museum chronicles the lives of Jewish people in Manchester and their contribution to making the city what it is today. It also holds a tremendous number of artefacts, papers and records from the First World War era, and we are delighted that following a very positive meeting with Alex Cropper the MJM Curator, *We Were There Too* and the MJM will be working together, sharing histories and new stories as we unearth them.



Manchester Jewish Museum

FEBRUARY

Building on the responses from Liverpool and Manchester, requests for ***We Were There Too*** have been rolling in, so much so that the February diary has had to be closed. Our team will be running two Reminiscence Sessions; one at The Nicky Alliance Day Centre in North Manchester, and a second at the Chabad Community Care Luncheon Club in South Manchester. We will also be engaging with pupils at King David Primary School in Manchester.

MARCH

In March we are moving down the M62 to Liverpool to run workshops with King David High School's Year 9 pupils. Staying in Merseyside we are hoping to deliver our first roadshow in Southport to coincide with the launch of a book about the History of Jews in the town. We will also be delivering our first roadshow in North Manchester on 24th March, to be hosted and supported by Heaton Park Synagogue. Keep an eye on our [website](http://www.jewsfww.uk) for further information about this event, or contact Nicki, Project Administrator, on nicki@jewsfww.uk.

PODCAST

In the coming weeks we will be recording a number of podcasts which we will be uploading onto the main website (www.jewsfww.uk) so not only will you be able to read about ***We Were There Too***, you will be able to see the stories, roadshows and school visits in action.

Rodney Ross

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