

Leeds launch of project to remember war heroes

THE Leeds launch of 'British Jews in the First World War — We Were There Too' will be held at the United Hebrew Congregation on Thursday, June 23 (7.45pm).

The project is a unique digital archive created to capture, record and preserve the impact, experience and contribution of Britain's Jewish communities during the First World War era.

The organisation is appealing to the people of Leeds and other northern communities to help with collecting the stories of those who fought for their country.

One such story is that of Gabriel Forster, who was born in 1898 in Leeds and lived on Grange Crescent in the Chapeltown area of the city.

Gabriel enlisted early in the war in September, 1914, with the Royal Army Medical Corps.

In April 1918 he received a gunshot wound to his right leg. This resulted in his leg having to be amputated below the knee.

After treatment in France and in Scotland, Gabriel was transferred

to the Northern General Hospital at Beckett Park, Leeds, where he was fitted with an artificial limb in May, 1919.

Jewish women also wanted to play their part in the war effort.

One such lady was Lizzie Minkin, who was born in 1899, and so was a teenager during the War.

She became a 'Canary Girl', filling shells at Barnbow Munitions Factory. The factory in East Leeds was so large that it was described as a 'city within a city'.

This was dangerous work, and Lizzie died at the age of just 43 due to the damage to her lungs caused while working with munitions.

Project manager Rodney Ross said: "Stories like this are often hidden away in attics and in family albums, which is why people from the community getting involved in the project is so important.

"It is vital that we capture the experiences of the Jewish Community during the First World War now before they are lost"

■ Visit jewswww.uk and or email contactus@jewswww.uk