



We Were There Too project director Alan Fell unveiled the website on 30 June

Website saves WW1 Jewish stories

The lives of Jewish Londoners who served during the First World War are being commemorated online thanks to a free new interactive website.

Launched in June, *We Were There Too* (jewsfww.london) contains details of men and women who contributed to the war effort, both overseas and on home soil.

Made possible as a result of a £408,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the website is split into two main sections: one offering contextual information about Jewish life in the capital during the conflict, and another featuring photographs and stories about specific individuals.

Users can also browse historic directories and even light a virtual Yahrzeit candle, traditionally lit on the anniversary of a loved one's death.

The material on the site has been compiled by the London Jewish

Cultural Centre in partnership with the Jewish Lads' & Girls' Brigade, whose members have spent recent months undertaking painstaking research.

More records will be added over the coming years, with the ultimate aim of creating a permanent digital archive for future generations.

The website was unveiled at a launch event held in London's historic Bevis Marks Synagogue on Thursday 30 June, followed by a remembrance ceremony to mark 100 years since the start of the Battle of the Somme – a campaign that claimed the lives of 34 British Jewish soldiers on the opening day alone.

Demonstrating the site to visitors, project director Alan Fell said it had "...never been more timely to remind ourselves and others that the Jewish community has contributed to the fabric of British society for a very long time and continues to do so".

CAN YOU HELP?

Members of the public are being asked to share their knowledge of England's 400,000 listed buildings and monuments.

The crowdsourcing initiative, dubbed 'Enrich the List', has been launched by Historic England, which looks after the listing process. Established in 1882, the system helps to protect sites of historic importance from destruction, ranging from palaces to pigsties.

To contribute, users need to navigate to historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list, where the entire list can be searched for free. Once a relevant entry has been found, people can upload their own stories, memories and photographs at the bottom of the page. Although posts will be vetted to prevent spam, it is up to users to make sure their submissions are factually accurate.



The public can now add comments and photos to listed building descriptions

NEWS IN BRIEF

Findmypast appoints interim CEO

Findmypast has appointed Jay Verkler as the company's new interim CEO. Verkler, who spent a decade as both President and CEO of FamilySearch, said he would use the opportunity to "build on existing relationships and to establish new ones across the globe". The US entrepreneur temporarily replaces Annelies van den Belt, who has left the position after three years – a tenure that saw a major redesign of the Findmypast interface and the acquisition of historic books site Mocavo.

Calderdale burial collection complete

More than 200,000 burial and cremation records from the Calder Valley region of West Yorkshire have been published on deceasedonline.com. Spanning 1861-1996, the material covers all seven cemeteries owned by Calderdale Council, as well as Park Wood Crematorium in Elland. Searching the database and viewing basic details is free, but a subscription or pay-per-view credits are required in order to view scans of the original documents.



Randal Gill was honoured at a ceremony in June

Societies honour genealogist's legacy

Two family history societies came together earlier this summer to pay tribute to a leading genealogist. On 18 June, the North of Ireland Family History Society (NIFHS) made a posthumous presentation to the family of former president Randal Gill, to mark his election as a Fellow of the Irish Genealogical Research Society. Gill, who died in 2012, had been a member of both organisations for more than three decades and is credited with aiding the growth of the NIFHS Library and Research Centre in Newtownabbey.

Ancestry reports post-Brexit surge

Ancestry reported a surge of activity following June's Brexit result. In the week after Britain's vote to leave the European Union was confirmed, the subscription site saw a 40 per cent increase in people taking out trial memberships and a 20 per cent spike in users searching its Irish collections – figures attributed to Britons checking their eligibility to claim passports for other EU member countries. The full story is at bit.ly/29ulHIG.