



*Top L to R:* Lieutenant Colonel Simon Soskin, Grenadier Guards; Able Seaman Dylan Marshall; Rabbi Major Reuben Livingstone, Jewish Chaplain to HM Armed Forces; Group Captain Philip Lester RAF; Hon. Vice Admiral The Lord Sterling GCVO, CBE, RNR; Alan Fell, We Were There Too; Drummer Cameron Shayle; Colonel Martin Newman; Brian Bloom RNR, National Chairman of AJEX

*Bottom L to R:* Cdt Lance Corporal Ruby-Rose Mansoor; Sub Lieutenant Ashley Sweetland MBE, RNR; Paula Kitching, We Were There Too

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## WEBSITE LAUNCH AND COMMEMORATION OF THE BRITISH JEWISH MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, 250 representatives from across the community, joined the *We Were There Too* team and the Heritage Lottery Fund at Bevis Marks Synagogue for the launch of the new *We Were There Too* interactive website. A full demonstration of the site by Project Director, Alan Fell, was followed by a moving commemoration of the tens of thousands of British Jewish men and women who served their country in the Great War.

With the AJEX and JLGB Standards flying, Rabbis, military personnel and guest speakers read powerful poetry from the trenches and described the events that led to the worst day in British Military history, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Among the 20,000 British troops who fell that day were 34 Jewish soldiers. Their names were read out, perhaps for the first time in a hundred years,

and their sacrifice was remembered and honoured.

As Alan Fell said in his recently published letter to The Times (9/7/16):

‘In the aftermath of Brexit and the noticeable rise in racist incidents, there has never been a timelier moment to remind our countrymen that *We Were There Too*. This project aims to find, capture and preserve stories of Jewish individuals who served and contributed to the British First World War effort. We hope it will provide a valuable educational tool in the fight against anti-Semitism in this country.’

**To read and see more click here:**

[Hundreds gather to honour the thousands of Jews who served in the First World War](#) – Board of Deputies

[Community marks Somme centenary at Bevis Marks](#) – Jewish News

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## WHAT'S NEXT?

Now the website is fully functional, the Team will be working hard over the summer to:

- Add new History Windows, archives and educational tools, screened and edited by our team of experts, as new materials are prepared and become available.
- Recruit and train volunteers to help members of the community access research materials and create Personal Records on the site.
- Contact all those people who, since the Project began over 4 years ago, have expressed interest in participating in the Project.
- Plan community engagement events across the Greater London area for November, December 2016 and January 2017.

**The first community event will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> November at the University of Roehampton, where there are remarkable links to the Jewish community over many centuries. We are delighted to be working with The Jewish Resource Centre, which is housed at the University.**



*We Were There Too* at the Yoni Jesner Award ceremony 2016

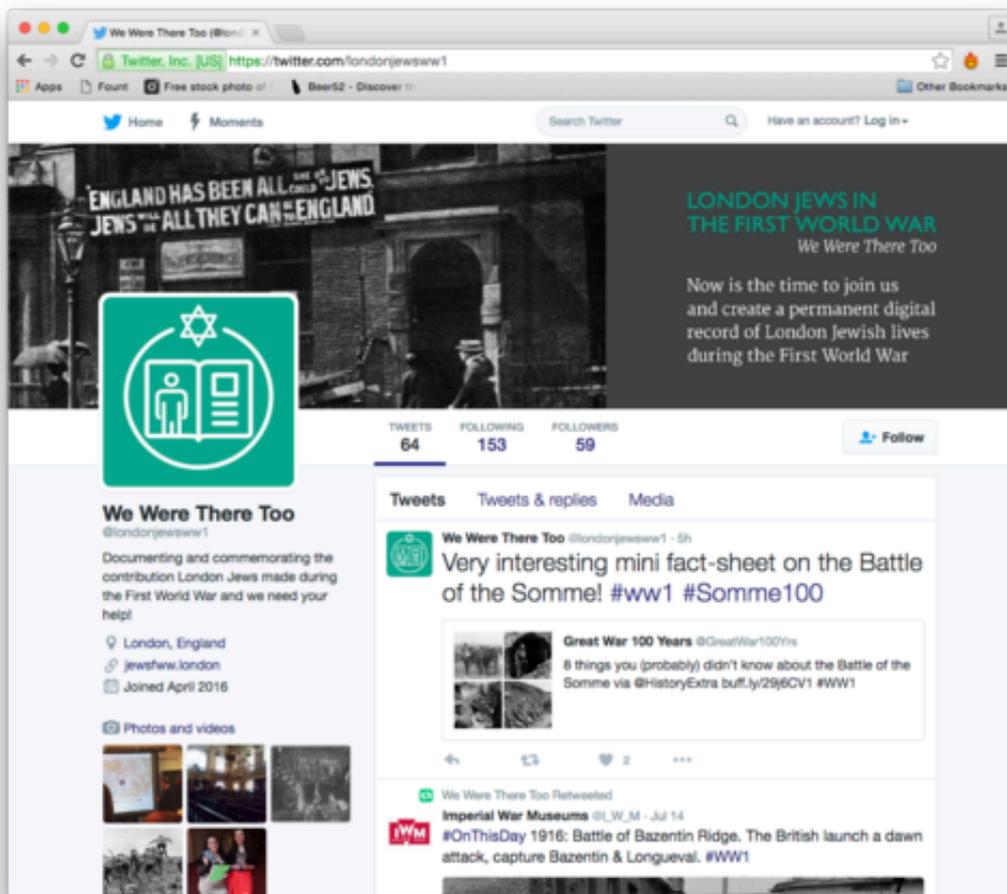
## SPREADING THE WORD

The launch of the website was a successful start to bringing the Project to public attention. Now, we aim to keep in the public eye by using a number of different communication channels:

- Assemblies and lesson plans are being created on key moments of the war by Project Manager and historian, Paula Kitching, and made available on the website for use by teachers in Jewish and non-Jewish schools. The first one, on the Battle of the Somme, was uploaded in June and included stories of some of the Jewish soldiers who lost their lives in the fighting. Teachers have used them and responded with positive feedback. Schools will be kept informed of future uploads.
- Articles describing the Project have been sent to over 150 London synagogues for publication in community magazines and newsletters over the coming months
- A twitter feed has been established: **@londonjewsww1** – If you are a tweeter, please follow us and help us to reach as many people as we can.
- A media centre has been created on the website with materials, which can be downloaded for publicity purposes.

**To read and see more click here:**

[\*We Were There Too\* Media Centre](#)



The *We Were There Too* Twitter feed

If you would like to get more involved in any of these areas, or know someone else who might, please email [contactus@jewsffw.london](mailto:contactus@jewsffw.london)

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**Alan Fell**

Project Director

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