

Community “racing against time” to collect WW1 Jewish tales after funds awarded

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The grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is for a digital project called ‘We Were There Too,’ and will lead to an interactive archive and website recording the “impact, experience and contribution” of British Jews from 1914-1919.

“It is now a race against time to collect second generation stories of this period,” said Michael Marx, the chairman of London Jewish Cultural Centre trustees. “The project could not be timelier.”

The JLGB (Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade), founded in 1895, is lead partner on the project, which is due to take two years to complete. More than 500 JLGB members lost their lives during the conflict.

JLGB vice-president John Cooper said: “This is a wonderful opportunity for young people to use digital technology to promote their heritage and at the same time gain useful skills and qualifications.”

The role Jews played in Britain’s First World War effort is not well-known, said Marx, and the digital project may help raise awareness of the men and women who served in both the military and the Home Front.

“Our community played a very significant part in the First World War, and it is often overshadowed by the Second World War and its terrible events,” he said.

The website will upload stories alongside records, photographs and documents, with innovative

3D scanning of artefacts such as buckles, belts and medals.

“We are delighted to be able to support this project, looking at a significant yet often under-explored aspect of London Jewish life,” said Stuart Hopley, head of Heritage Lottery Fund London.

“It is a great opportunity for people across London to learn about and commemorate the important contribution made by the Jewish community to the war effort.”