Newcastle University is a partner in Living Legacies 1914-1918, a First World War Engagement Centre based at Queen’s University Belfast set up to connect academic and community researchers interested in First World War heritage, and in the ways in which the events of 1914-1918 continue to resonate today. Social Renewal is at the heart of the Centre’s aim to bring together disparate communities – particularly those in Northern Ireland and the North East of England – through connecting projects that have a common interest in the First World War and its continued relevance. The Centre is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (as part of their ‘World War One and Its Legacies’ scheme) and the Heritage Lottery Fund for three years from January 2014 to December 2016.

Dr Emma Short, Research Associate for Living Legacies at Newcastle University since November 2014, coordinates, organises and publicises the range of activities taking place at Newcastle University to mark the centenary of the First World War, and also facilitates engagement with community groups through events under this theme. The position is co-funded by the Living Legacies Centre and by NISR, under the Past in the Present theme. These activities are logged in the central Living Legacies database, which will be submitted to the AHRC as evidence of the Centre’s activity at the conclusion of the project. Alongside this, events are publicised through a new weblog, ‘The First World War at Newcastle University’ which also includes information on the various ongoing projects related to the First World War.

The first two Living Legacy events took place in April 2015, supported by the McCord Centre for Historic and Cultural Landscape in addition. The First World War postgraduate symposium featured 16 speakers from institutions across the country as well as speakers from Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. Connecting Communities Through Researching First World War Heritage brought together community and academic researchers to share and discuss their work on the First World War, with the aim of developing relationships between HEI and non-HEI partners. Upcoming events include Your Community in the First World War, one of three roadshow events aimed at community groups and researchers who are involved in a First World War research project; and a one-day symposium on Women and the First World War. This project is further expected to lead to a journal article on Gertrude Bell’s role at the Arab Bureau from November 1915 until the end of the First World War, which will be published in 2016. Dr Stacy Gillis and Dr Emma Short have also recently submitted a bid to the Living Legacies Research Fund for a large project to be carried out over the next year investigating women’s leisure activities in the North East of England during the First World War. The project will explore new workplace opportunities as a result of male conscription, and co-investigators from Tyneside Women’s Health, the Women’s Institute, the Search Project and Newcastle University will identify how female leisure was remade during the War.