

## **The Significance of the Centenary**

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Website: <http://thecentenary.wordpress.com>

### **SUMMARY**

This project examines what makes a centenary commemoration different to any other. The timeliness and significance of this question is evidenced by the current and forthcoming centenaries which are the focus of the research. From the recent commemoration of suffrage, revolution and the sinking of the Titanic, to the world-wide events of the First World War, this project places contemporary centenary events in the context of historical celebrations and commemorations in order to interrogate exactly who is now remembering for whom, and how.

Calls for centennial commemoration and celebration are often met by claims that the time for such activity has passed - particularly as there are no longer any living witnesses - and claims that it is more appropriate to focus on the present and future. Yet, these events continue to have significance for the families and communities involved. As those tasked with caring for the future, museums and heritage sites are at the centre of negotiating these controversial, and very public, issues. This timely, interdisciplinary, cross-sector project works to contextualise, compare and convey the significance of the centenary and to support museums and heritage sites to embed robust ways of negotiating these commemorations.

The proposal will bring together academics, early career researchers, doctoral students, curators, and educators to work in a genuinely interdisciplinary way. The diversity of expertise within the network will facilitate a focus on different cultural conceptions and manifestations of centenary activity. The findings will be of significance for museum and heritage site professionals and educators across the sectors. The project will involve four workshops at the University of Birmingham, the University of Sheffield, the Historic Royal Palaces Tower of London, and Cardiff University. These meetings will be structured to promote dialogue, collaboration and progression of the fields. The project steering group will maintain a website and blog throughout its duration to strengthen the exchange of ideas, report back on the workshops, maintain the impetus beyond the life of the initial project, and attract interest more widely from the constituencies of the members. In addition to the website and blog, the steering group will disseminate results via a film, a conference paper, and a co-authored article.