



Free Spirit

HORSE MEMORIAL APPEAL

www.freespiritmemorial.co.uk
facebook.com/FreeSpiritHorseMemorial

The Free Spirit Horse Memorial Project is raising funds to create a lasting memorial acknowledging the horse's unfaltering service to mankind in times of conflict and work. The project was launched in 2014 as the First World War Centenary Partnership started its programme to mark the outbreak of the war. The memorial will be a life sized bronze statue by award winning sculptress Georgie Welch and a site has been chosen at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire, home to 320 thought provoking memorials and with facilities allowing up to 500,000 visitors per year.

This accolade to the horse is the only memorial the NMA has granted to an animal in its own right and we aim to unveil the statue in 2018 to coincide with the centenary anniversary marking the end of World War I. The Free Spirit Horse Memorial feels privileged to be given the opportunity to share the recognition of the horse's unconditional qualities of companionship and loyalty with generations to come and this tribute will also celebrate the horses that continue to serve us today through work, rehabilitation of the sick and disabled, education and of course the joy and pleasure they provide in leisure and sport.

Inspired by a drawing "Image of a Horse" created by a student from a local high school the Free Spirit Horse Memorial has brought together a diverse group of people, sharing a variety of experience and ideas. The project provides education to all groups covering the role played by the horse, past to present. A local history teacher is coordinating a community history project and has provided a history pack that is available to download from the Free Spirit website.

The project recently attended the Wales Remembers Partnership Day 2016 held by the Welsh Government and the Imperial War Museum, and were given the opportunity to display some of the artwork produced for the Free Spirit Art Competition. We have recently been awarded charitable status and are extremely fortunate to have the support of fantastic ambassadors including Richard Davidson, four times Olympian and former British Dressage Team Captain, and Richard Waygood MBE, former Riding Master of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, International Three Day Eventer, Chef d'Equipe to the British Equestrian Teams and Choreographer to the World Famous Musical Ride.

During a recent event to "Celebrate the Horse" held at Defence Medical Services, Whittington on March 30th, our ambassadors Richard Waygood, Graham Winton and John Fairley gave their time to speak about their extensive equine experiences through history, sport and art. We were joined by students from Broadway Academy in Birmingham reading the poem "War Horse" by Brenda Williams and Hurst Green Shires talking about the role of women and the remount depots during World War 1.

Local songwriter Dominic Malin performed the Free Spirit song together with the young volunteers. The song captures the thoughts of young disabled riders within the lyrics and the Free Spirit project believes that

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Charity No 1164543

Maquette by Georgie Welch
Image courtesy of Allan Williamson

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encouraging everyone to share the empowering qualities of music will bridge between generations and provide an alternative means of connecting, to ensure everyone is included even where traditional forms of communication are compromised.

The Free Spirit project aims to create a tribute to the horse for people to share without boundaries and inclusive of all in the community, whether their interest lies in history, sport, art, music or simply a love and admiration for horses.

A bronze Free Spirit Maquette has been created and we need to raise £250,000 to create the life sized tribute at the National Memorial Arboretum. The fundraising total currently stands at £32,000.



We hope that you will be interested in supporting our project to provide a fitting tribute designed to show the strength, power and loyalty of these beautiful creatures and remind people for many years to come the huge debt owed to the horse. Further information can be found at www.freespiritmemorial.co.uk or if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at gartmoreridingschool@googlemail.com or on 01543 686117.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Francis
Chair, Free Spirit Memorial

"Since the beginning I have been with the Free Spirit Memorial project and have seen the dedication and commitment of everyone involved. It has brought together a community of individuals, enabling people from all backgrounds to share their passion, love and beauty the horse represents. I wanted the song to embrace the qualities associated with the horse and create a musical score that reflects the past, engages with the present and carries a message into tomorrow's future."

Dominc Malin - Songwriter

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