



Battle, East Sussex

1066 Country

“Birthplace of Modern England”

Battle Heritage Trails Project Evaluation

Project delivered by

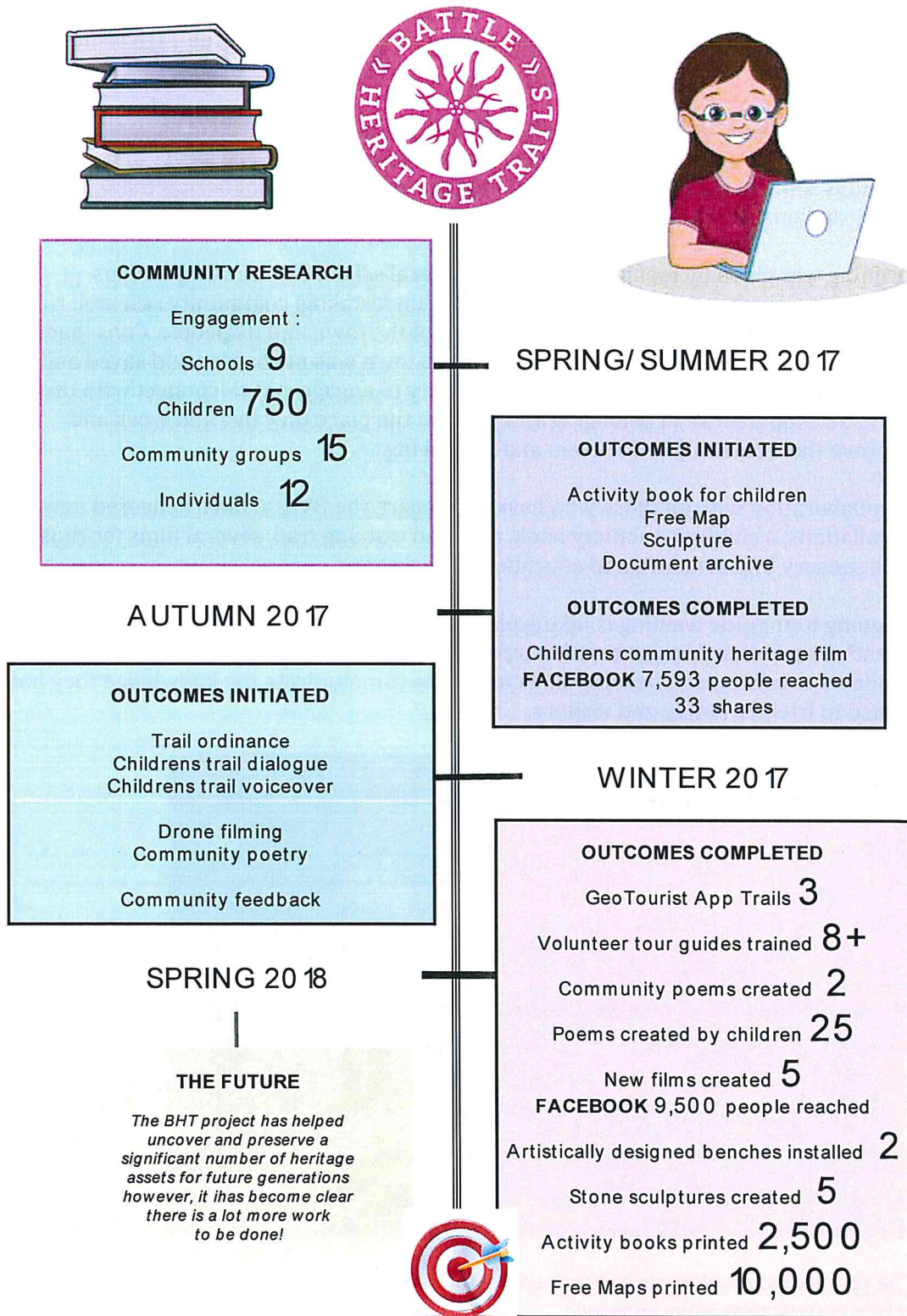
**Battle Visual Arts Development Committee (BVADC)
on behalf of Battle Town Council**



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Project delivery schedule infographic



Introduction and executive summary

The Battle Heritage Trails (BHT) project was an inclusive heritage project focused on the cultural, natural and social heritage of the historic town of Battle and surrounding areas, from its formation after the construction of Battle Abbey in the 11th century, to the present day.

Delivered by the BVADC on behalf of Battle Town Council, the project has engaged the entire community in devising a local heritage list and creation of a legacy archive that provides some of the missing links between our most prominent heritage site, Battle Abbey and our wider heritage.

Training was given by members of BVADC to local school children and various community groups to enlist their assistance in undertaking community research to gather oral, written and photographic history of the town and its people. Consequently a diverse bank of knowledge of the history of the town was uncovered and saved and the project has given the community an opportunity to engage and re-connect with their town, develop a sense of belonging and pride in the place they live and work and improve their personal self-esteem and well-being.

In collaboration with all those who have taken part, the BVADC have delivered new art installations, a children's activity book, a guided walking trail, several films for those with sensory impairment's and educational workshops.

On going tour guide training is taking place in conjunction with the East Sussex "Beat the Street" team (<https://www.beatthestreet.me/eastsussex/howtoplay>), in order to enable residents to continue to develop skills in how to communicate the knowledge they have gained to friends, family and visitors.



The project facebook page has proved a vital link for community engagement and has an active and participatory audience.

The project's aims and outcomes were fully met providing inclusion across a wide variety of ages and groups throughout the community.

Lesley Samms & Mary Midgley - Project Management

Project aims and outcomes

Aim 1 – Outcomes for Heritage - Heritage assets will be uncovered and saved. It will be better interpreted, explained and showcased and It will be more accessible to both residents and visitors.

Aim 2 – Outcomes for People – Battle residents will have learned about heritage and will have gained new skills in the areas of research and interpreting heritage for others.

Resident's attitudes and behaviour will also be changed as they come to appreciate the cultural and natural diversity of the town they live and work in.

Aim 3 – Outcomes for Communities - A greater number of people will engage with heritage. Battle will be a better place to live, work and visit and the local economy will be boosted by greater footfall in the High street and increased numbers and length of stay by tourists.

Qualitative feedback

Aim 1 – Outcomes for Heritage - Heritage assets will be uncovered and saved. It will be better interpreted, explained and showcased and it will be more accessible to both residents and visitors.

To fulfil this aim, the BVADC engaged with and visited local schools and community groups in order to recruit volunteers to assist with gathering information and undertaking research about the town and its history.

In order to engage the very elderly (over 80 years) in the project some individual oral history interviews were also undertaken, and others lent personal photographs and books, which have all been scanned and included in a physical and digital heritage archive accessible to all via the town council and Battle District Historical Society (BDHS). This has preserved a significant amount of first hand experiences and information that was previously unknown and or unseen and which has now been saved for future generations.

In order to ensure maximum community engagement with the project we also set up a Facebook page and an Instagram account. Photos, “Did you Know” and “Seen in Battle” posts have been regularly placed on these sites in order to trigger memories and also provide community with information as the project has evolved. Other marketing opportunities exploited by BVADC have been local press and the regular marketplace events produced by Rural Rother and Rother Voluntary Action.

The information and research supplied by all the volunteers has been utilised in collaboration with the volunteers to create various physical outcomes including, new public art installations and benches, a children’s activity book available to purchase both locally and online, a guided walking trail, several films including 4 for those with sensory impairment’s, educational workshops and a free map.

BDHS provided significant support for the project throughout and benefited as a consequence, with a number of their previously held theories either validated, questioned or disproved during the course of the project.

Information was also uncovered in relation to the town’s industrial past, which it is now clearly evident requires significant further investigation in order to ensure it is accurately recorded and saved for future generations.

Example of Heritage assets saved:

5 Whistler family photo albums, which include previously unseen images of Battle from the early 1900's, were loaned to the project for research and archiving purposes.



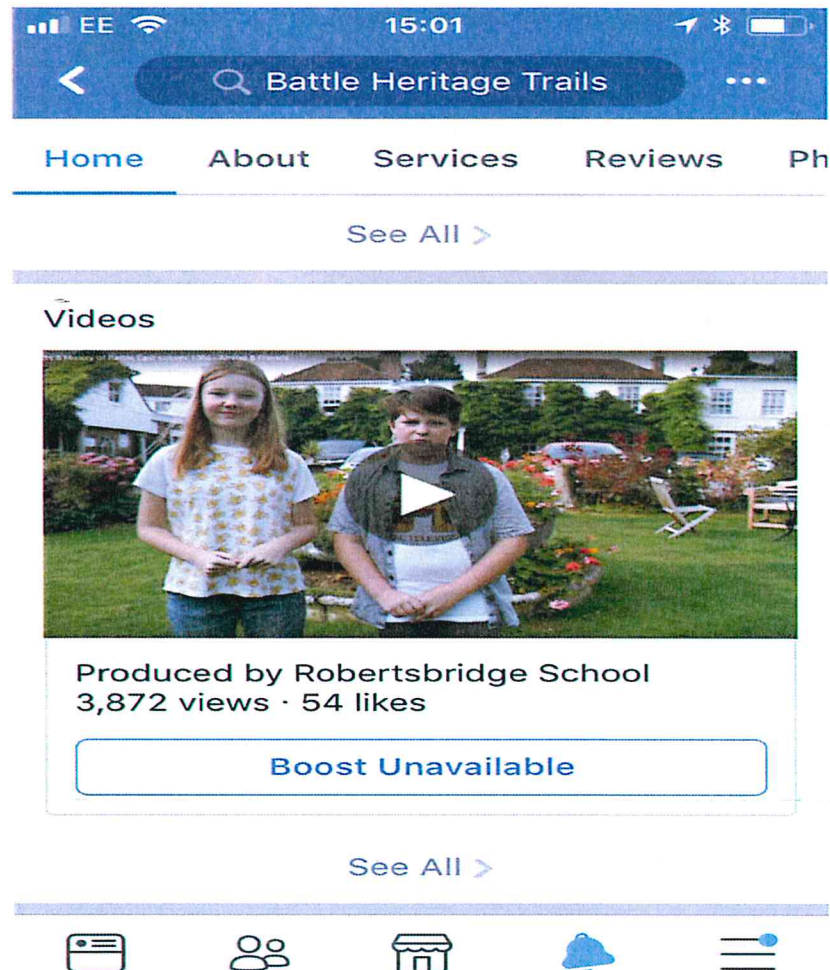
- This wedding image from 1948 was used as part of the imagery for the church film.



- This image is annotated 'Nana Wood nee Ashton' circa 1900

Example of how assets have been better interpreted, explained and showcased to the widest possible audience:

1. Film shared on social media created by local school children interpreting the heritage assets they uncovered during research:



As can be seen from this screenshot, to date this film has had nearly 4,000 views and 54 likes on the BHT facebook page alone.

Comments include:

Bob Nicholas Well done kids. I lived in Battle until I was about 17 (I'm 65 now). I never knew where Powdermill Lane got it's name. Thank you

Simon Merrick Fantastic insight to the town. Thank you and well done for producing such a brilliant video - and tour guide.

2. Film shared on social media created by the BVADC in collaboration with the church community and Westend Films



Battle Heritage Trails

Published by Lesley Samms [?] · 26 April at 15:59 · 🌐

St. Mary the Virgin Church - Founded by Abbot Ralph circa 1102 - 1107 A.D.



👤 8,459 people reached

Boost Again

As can be seen from this screenshot this film has reached over 8,450 people since its release on 26th April.

Comments Include:

[Mary Crouch](#) *Stunning pictures*

[Angela Holland](#) *This was so lovely to see and brought back memories of being in the Choir and getting married there*

"The Dean and I watched the film yesterday and he is absolutely delighted with it. You have done such a lovely and professional job and certainly chose the right day to film!" – Tracy Dixon, St Mary's parish treasurer.

3. Sculpture and Bench on Park Lane – Gunpowder/Battle Bonfire Boyes



4. Children's Activity Book available to purchase online from multiple sources

 **YouByYou Books**
10 hrs · 🌐

Battle Activity Book for children now on sale from
<http://www.youbyyou.co.uk/battle-activity.html>



Battle Activity Book for children | YouByYou Books
Battle activity book for children. A colourful, activity-filled book for children all about the town of Battle.
YOUBYYOU.CO.UK

Comments Include:

This is a remarkable and excellent book – George Kiloh BDHS



"Loved the book and incentivised them to visit museum" – Kris Alexander

"I thought the Activity Book was really interesting. I really liked the activities page with the word search and the Raspberry Jam recipe; not so keen on the colouring." - Byron Pax Year 9

5. Heritage walking tour & poetry workshop



Examples of poems created by children:

Catie – 11 yrs Battle and Langton CEP

*The town of Battle is where I live
King Harold died in 1066
All the cattle market stalls
Used to be outside my school
The walk has been so much fun
And our 1066 adventure has just begun*

Freddie – 12 yrs Claverham Community College

*Beautiful Battle
Battle Battle beautiful Battle,
From the ancient walls to the sale of cattle
The circle of time come round again,
When the old kin fell, the leader of men,
Jam factories which used a smelly boot,
And the peasants which liked to steal and loot.*

*I take photographs of the Abbey walls
Post about it, hear ghostly calls,
Following in my relatives wake,
Watching the guy burned at the stake.*

*In 2066 where will I be?
Have a wife? Children? I'll be 63!
Will I ever read what I wrote with this pen
Or will I never ever see it again.*

Comments Include:

"Thank you so much for a wonderful tour of Battle, you have really opened our student's eyes to the past and they were inspired to produce some amazing work. Even as a teacher of history, I learnt so many things about our local town that I didn't know and that I can share with my colleagues and classes." - **Mrs Clark – history teacher at Claverham Community College.**

"A well thought out and suitably timed session. The children were fully engaged, keen to join in with the tour, talk and written work. All of the group contributed and the children felt a sense of achievement passing on their work. Thank you to all involved." - **Mr Hughes – Head teacher at Battle and Langton CEP**

*"Thank you... it was great fun. I really think the children got a lot out of the Heritage Trail; They all seemed to really enjoy the experience. They asked very good and interesting questions and were obviously excited by the History that, before the trail, they hadn't noticed they were surrounded by... I bet some of them will be there in 2066 to see their poems and illustrations in the light of day once again. As for myself I too found the trail fascinating. It really put time into perspective for me. I was also really honoured to have the poem *Battle Cry* placed on the page next to lyrics from *Sussex by the Sea*."* – **Tony Peek poet**

Aim 2 – Outcomes for People – Battle residents will have learned about heritage and will have gained new skills in the areas of research and interpreting heritage for others.

Resident's attitudes and behaviour will also be changed as they come to appreciate the cultural and natural diversity of the town they live and work in.

It is evident from the quantity of research received, number of artefacts donated, proactive requests received to give oral history and quality of the physical outcomes, that the community has significantly engaged with this project and has gained considerable new skills as a consequence.

It is also clear that resident's attitudes and behaviour has changed as they have come to appreciate the cultural and natural diversity of the town they live and work in. This is evidenced by the increase in community engagement from people who did not engage with the project in the initial stages, as physical outcomes of the project have started to appear around the town and on social media.

Example one: Whilst filming within the area of market-square and the almonry, a lady who had once lived in the Almonry with her husband, a local teacher, and children approached the team. As a result, her memories and some photos were recorded and scanned into the archive. This has provided a vital record of what the almonry house was like to live in (as opposed to work in) during the second half of the 20th century.



- A view of the sitting room (now BTC offices)



- A Family gathering

Example two: The public art sculptures and benches have generated a great deal of enthusiasm and re-ignited memories within the community.

For example, whilst installation of the first bench and sculpture commemorating the Newbery Jam factory was underway, one man told us about his family who had worked in the jam factory, and another talked about remembering the high street being closed at 5am to let the fruit lorries in during the 1960's/70's. They were delighted to have the bench to remind them of times past and keep the memories alive for future generations.



- Installation of the Newbery Jam factory sculpture and bench at Marley Gardens, Battle



- The carved end of the Jam factory sculpture with sculptor Gavin Roweth

Example three: We have observed significant increased engagement on Battle social media sites, with people posting old photographs, observations of local interest and artefacts as they go about their daily lives.

An example comment accompanying a new commemorative plaque image: *"its amazing how you can live somewhere for years and never notice so much"* Amanda 21/5/18

Aim 3 – Outcomes for Communities - A greater number of people will engage with heritage. Battle will be a better place to live, work and visit and the local economy will be boosted by greater footfall in the High street and increased numbers and length of stay by tourists.

Bearing in mind the project has only recently been completed, as yet we only have anecdotal evidence to confirm this aim has been completed. However a further community survey, similar to that conducted prior to the application for funding, is intended for the Autumn.

Example one: As a consequence of the research phase and poetry activities, the BVADC are in active dialogue with other schools and groups to undertake heritage town tours. Also, the East Sussex 'Beat the Street' team approached the BVADC and volunteered to support training of further tour guides, and this is now underway.

Example two: when the application for funding was made there were many unoccupied shops in the high street and others looked very shabby and in disrepair. New shops are now opening and significant redecoration of several buildings has been undertaken.



Claire Steed

Admin · 14 May at 21:05 · Battle

New Shop - Taylors of Battle May 2018

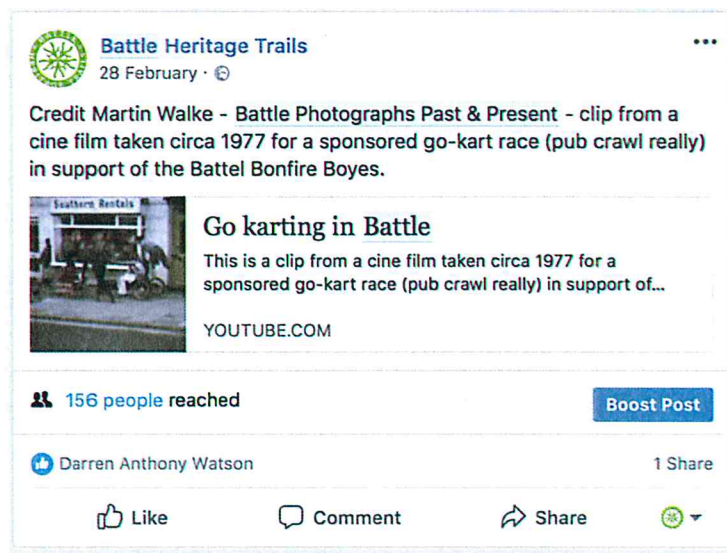


Like

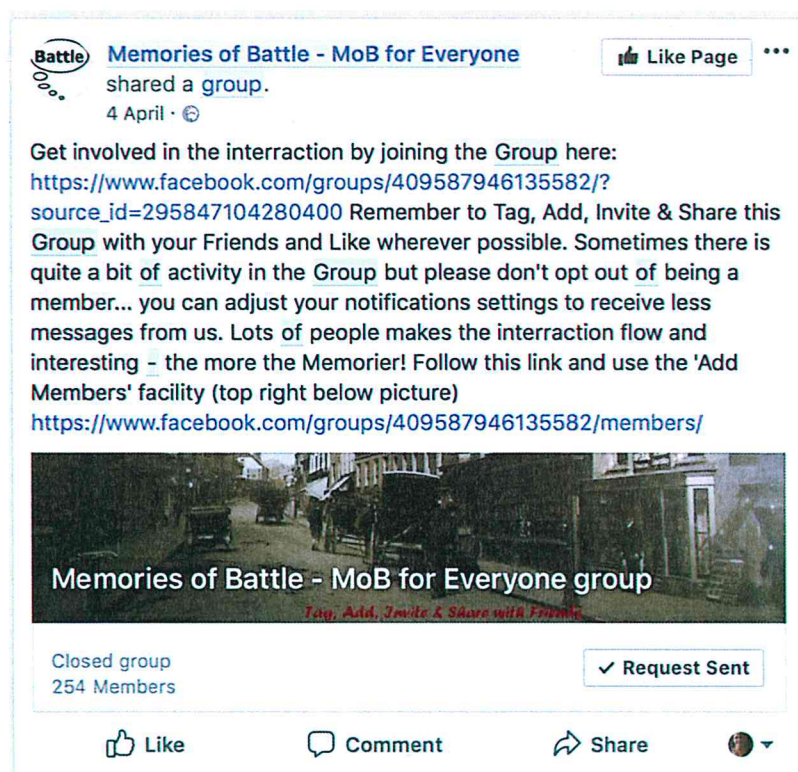
Comment

Share

Example three: several new social media pages relating to Battles heritage, in addition to those set up by the BVADC, have been spontaneously set up by the community. One of which is “Battle photographs past and present” which has approximately 1,200 members currently. Residents post photographs and film – old and new – and engage in discussions around memories and heritage.



Another new group is “Memories of Battle” which currently has 254 members.



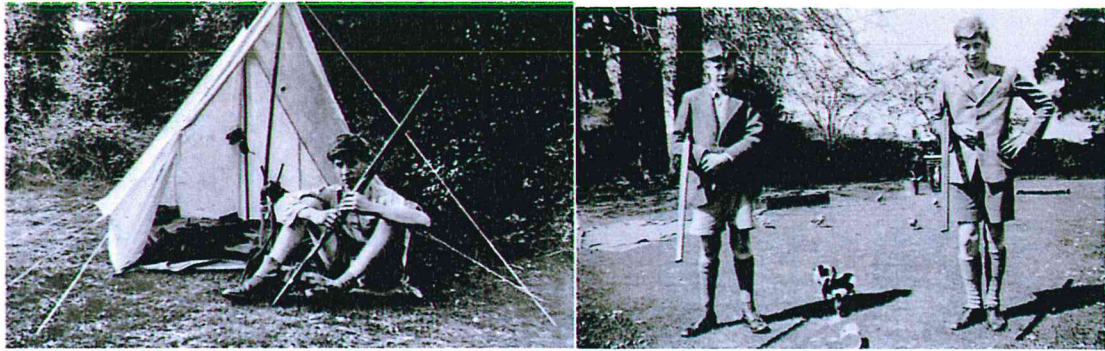
Lessons Learned

- Community engagement can be a very slow and time-consuming process. Increased project delivery time would therefore have provided opportunity for more in depth research to be undertaken.
- It is necessary to factor in potential commodity price increases when working with natural materials such as stone and wood.

Future Opportunities

- The town council has now identified the Almonry House as the most suitable building to be utilised as the community hub for heritage and educational activities.
- The project has identified the need to research and explore the town's industrial past in significant further detail as currently very little is known or preserved and any knowledge within the community is likely to be lost imminently if not recorded soonest.
- The project has identified a significant lack of past photographic record of the town and its residents, which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- As a consequence of the poetry workshops, the project has identified the opportunity to significantly increase visitor numbers to the town by utilising the heritage assets identified during this project to create an educational programme focused around the arts.

Photomontage



- Caldbec House 1940's

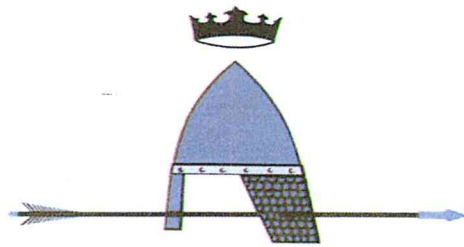


- Battle Medieval Fayre 1951



- Battle 1945

With thanks to our supporters:



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west end.

With Special Thanks to:



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