

Spring 2018

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DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



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LITERATURE*guide*

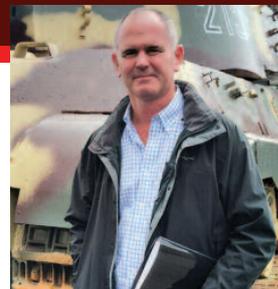
Accredited Member, Viv Whelpton showed how to incorporate war poetry in tours.

An inspiring and at times, moving talk.

See page 21 for more on literature on the battlefields

(Photo: John Harris)





OPENINGshot:

THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

Welcome fellow Members, Guild Partners, and Supporters to the Spring 2018 edition of Despatches, the house magazine of the Guild. Well, we have started the New Year with a bang! Many of you will just have recovered from the Annual Conference Weekend in Mons, what an amazing weekend that was in every respect. On behalf of your Board of Directors, I publicly thank everybody who played a role, no matter how small, in making it by far our most successful Guild Event to date.

You should be aware from the conference and from weekly bulletins, that we have launched our new website, it is not 100% functional yet but it is already receiving a lot of positive feedback. The Members Area will be online shortly; this will be a password-protected zone that will allow access to our Constitution, our Accounts, Minutes of our Meetings and information on Validation. You can also go on the site now to view and order Guild branded clothing from our new range of merchandise. Well done to Secretary, Tony Smith for pulling all of this together. Another feature of the website is access to electronic copies of Despatches – you can now read it wherever you are!

On another positive note, this is a bumper edition of Despatches with some great contributions from a wide variety of members. The content illustrates exactly what can be gained from Guild Membership, access to a wealth of shared experience and knowledge. Please keep your articles coming, the trend for the magazine is certainly upward and we are looking to maintain the current momentum by subsidising production costs from battlefield industry related advertisements in future

issues. The array of articles is our best yet, where to start? Well you could delve into literature on battlefield tours with Viv Whelpton, get all thespian with Sally Woodcock and the cast of Journey's End. We get off the beaten track and visit the battlefields of the Palestine Campaign with Gareth Davies and Guild Partners, Battle Honours. Perhaps you might ponder religion on the battlefield and how it fits into your guiding narrative with Richard Burgess or go walkabout on the Western Front with Mark Riddiford and a group of wandering Australians? If you really want to pause for thought, think the unthinkable with Bruce Cherry...is the world flat, are we all going to fall into an abyss at the end of the FWW Centenary? We all like a bit of research, John Hamill and Eugenie Brookes take a look at the pros and cons of using primary sources to support your guiding. We also have a contribution from our ever more active Italian contingent, with Francesco Di Cintio looking at the exploits of WW2 innovator Major Denis Forman. If all of this is a little tiring for you, join Blitz expert, Steve Hunnisset on a relaxing walk through wartime Woolwich.

I hope that you will all enjoy this issue and that you may show it to potential members, your magazine is another tangible example of the unrivalled benefits of membership. I am sure that you have had enough of me telling you about it and would much rather read it yourself. Best wishes to you wherever you are reading your copy. Above all, have a great guiding season everybody, stay safe, hone your skills and enjoy your guiding! If you see a fellow member, please stop and say hello, it is after all what the Guild is about.

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Material for publication in the Summer edition of Despatches must be with the Editor no later than 1 July 2018.

This is a deadline and submissions should be sent as far in advance as possible.

All material should be sent via Guild Secretary Tony Smith at:
secretary@gbg-international.com

THE PALESTINE CAMPAIGN 1917

Gareth Davies

For a military historian and battlefield guide Israel and Palestine has a great deal to offer. Head back in time several thousand years and you get to events such as the battle of Armageddon, the Jewish-Babylonian wars of the 6th century BC, and the Jewish-Roman wars of the first and second centuries AD. More recently there were the Crusades and their battles such as Horns of Hattin and Arsuf, and within living memory for many of us the wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973. This article however ignores all of those rich seams of history and focusses on the Great War and in particular the short period of Allenby's Palestine campaign of late 1917.



Nabi Samwil

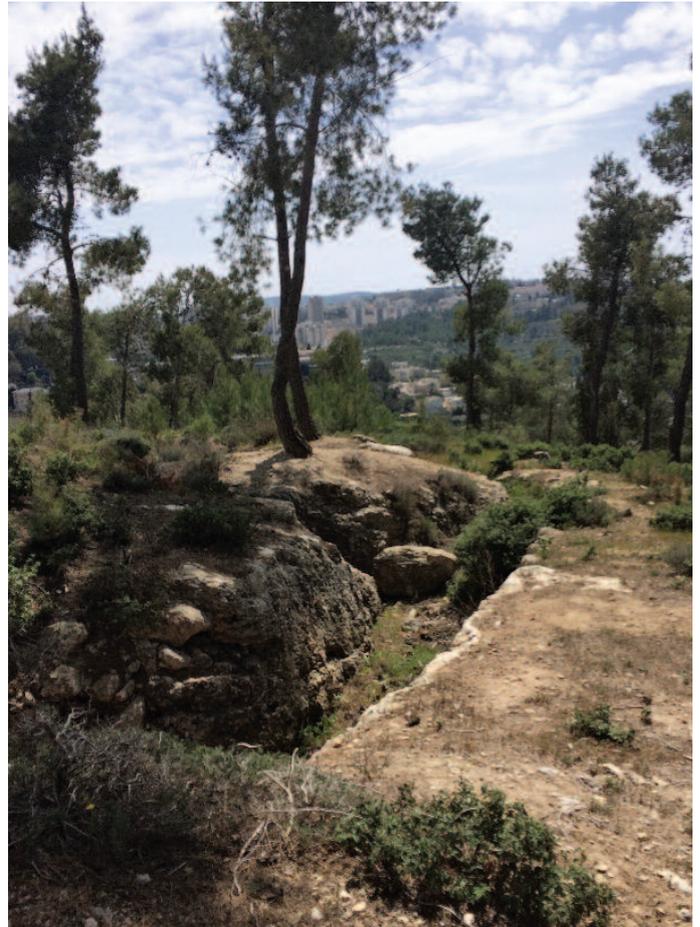
The Guild was well represented on the ground for the 100th anniversaries of a number of the key battles. Leading the way (as is only right and proper) was Guild Chairman Mike Peters who was leading a group of 30 Australians on Mat McLachlan's Beersheba centenary tour which, despite the name, covered

battles of 1918 as well as the 100th anniversary of actions in the south. A week later Battle Honours were on the ground. Led by me and Accredited Guild Member Jools Whippy, and with Accredited Guild Member Clive Harris in tow, this tour focussed on the battles of 1917. The participants were predominantly

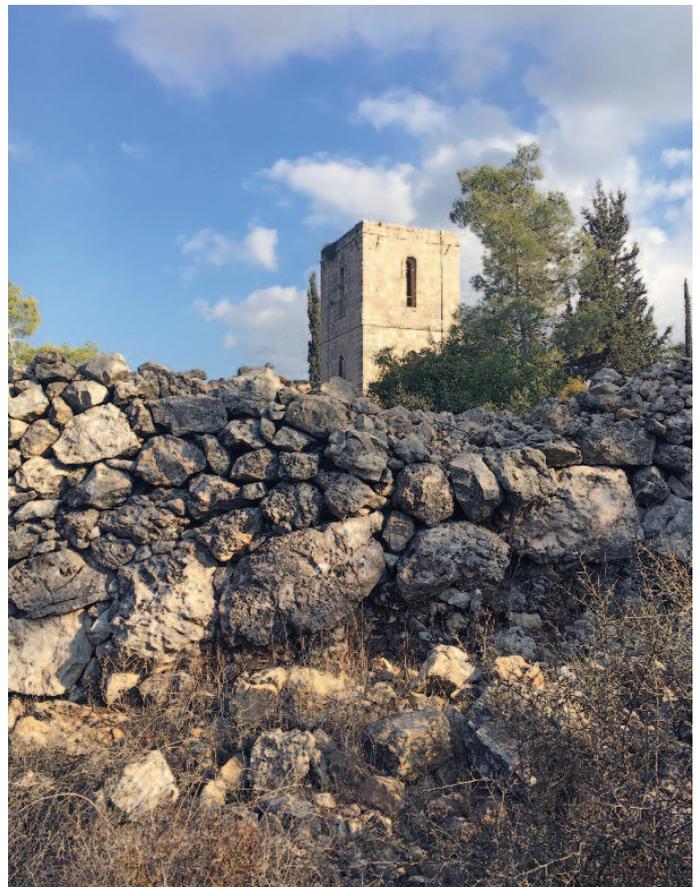
British but very appropriately included an Australian and a Kiwi, as well as the niece of a Yeoman who never returned – more of which later.

While this article will touch on some of the challenges of running battlefield tours somewhat off the beaten path, it is most definitely not my attempt at Assignment 5. I have written it to do a number of things (selection and maintenance of the aim failure?). First, as is only right and proper for someone who has such a passion for the Palestine campaign, I want to keep its story alive. It is not well known amongst historians and guides but those of us who claim subject matter expertise are keen to share our knowledge and this article does a little bit of that. Second, I want to give Guild members an insight into some of the challenges the two tours faced, some of which were unique to that part of the world. Third, I want to mention something that many of us, and not just those of us who were on the ground, felt wasn't quite right about some aspects of the centenary commemorations. And finally I want to share a little bit of the story of one of the men who fought out there.

First, some of the challenges of battlefield touring in Israel, and let's start with perception. I am in the lucky position of having lived and worked in Israel and the West Bank as a soldier/diplomat so I have a very good understanding of the country but for most people (and by most people I mean potential clients) it is a distant place (and not just geographically). The following comments are not uncommon when someone hears you are heading to that bit of the Middle East: "Israel, I heard it's dangerous. All those rocket attacks". "It'll take you days to get through security at the airport". "Stay away from the Arabs". "The Israelis are a very unfriendly bunch". "Customer service is non-existent". "They aren't interested in any history between the fall of the Temple and the 1930s". I am happy to state that, on the whole, they are all untrue. Yes, there are some security issues in the border regions (more of this in a moment) but it is very localised. Ben Gurion very rightly takes security very seriously but it is no less easy to get in or out than Heathrow. Both of the tours had Arab bus drivers who provided an interesting, and in my opinion vital, insight into life in contemporary Israel, and having had contact with Arabs didn't have any impact on our passage out of Israel at the end of the tour. The Israelis we met weren't at all miserable. And although customer service may not be as high as some of us might demand, it was no worse than that encountered in a number of establishments on the Western Front! And they are interested in Great War history. Led by Eran Tearosh The Society for the Heritage of WW1 in the Land of Israel has been working hard to bring the campaigns of 1917 and 1918 into the public eye and one upshot of his efforts are the display boards that are starting to appear at important sites. Israelis are, albeit slowly, taking an interest in the



Ottoman trenches at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem



The Watchtower and low wall that the 60th Division passed on 8 Dec 1917



Jools at Junction Station

Great War and are helping to preserve a number of significant locations. interest in the Great War and are helping to preserve a number of significant locations.

Next, some of the real challenges that we faced. As I have already written the border region has some very real security issues and on 3 November 2017 the IDF discovered a terrorist tunnel leading from Gaza into Israel and as a result an exclusion zone of some 4km was imposed along the border with Gaza. The upshot of this was that all the 2nd & 3rd Gaza sites that had been carefully reced earlier in the year (FSR 1909 does say 'seldom' and not 'never'), including the Anzac memorial, Sheikh Abbas and Tank Redoubt, were out of bounds. Against the (perceived) run of play the IDF Military Police manning the roadblock were incredibly friendly and helpful. We were able to speak to their Ops room and discuss alternatives and 10 minutes and a few selfies with the MPs later we were on our way.

Minor issues with coach drivers and hotels, and mislaid luggage and lost phones, are something that could interfere with tours in any country and so are not worthy of mention here other than to say that while my Arabic may be better than the Chairman's, my Hebrew is as non-existent as his. Having a local guide on board was absolutely vital for both tours (it was also a legal requirement) to help fix local issues. But often a simple walk away from the interference is all that is needed as was the case with the double (and separate) challenge of giggling Arab schoolgirls and Filipino guitars and choirs

at Nabi Samwil. Sadly this tactic wasn't as easily employed to avoid the F15s buzzing Junction Station.

100th anniversary commemorations are not everyone's cup of tea. The major anniversary events are often very busy and not all have been that well administrated but for many they are important events that are opportunities to shine a light on the battle(s) being commemorated, especially those that are less well known, and to have honest discussions about the history of the events and their significance. In many ways Beersheba 100 did this. Both tours met locals who knew nothing of the battle nor of its place in the wider campaign prior to 2017 and something similar happened in the Twittersphere where there were positive comments from many quarters, including from those who were there, about the experience. But Beersheba 100 also seemed to bring out some of the worst cases of poor use of history for nationalistic effect and at times the history that was being used was plain wrong. Hyperbole such as 'every man should have got the Victoria Cross' can easily be dismissed as heat of the moment excitement but when basic facts about force structures, command and leadership, tactics, and events are misused surely we are on a slippery slope? As one experienced historian and battlefield guide put it, some of what was being displayed was 'a classic mix of disrespect to every other nationality that fought and wilful ignorance of history'. Let's hope that the same mistakes aren't made in 2018.

Next, the campaign, which is of course what these tours were all about. It really does have something for everyone. At the Strategic level there is DLG and the East vs West debate. There are long lines of supply and communication, and links to other campaigns. And the force was multinational (it had soldiers from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the West Indies, Egypt, and the Pacific Islands). At the Operational level there are command issues (for example Murray being replaced by Allenby). In theatre there was a Maritime component (both 2nd and 3rd Gaza included naval bombardments, and the Navy was used as part of the deception plan to try to convince the Ottomans that an amphibious landing was about to happen), a Land component (10 Divisions, a mix of infantry and mounted, predominantly Territorial Force, most of whom had served at Gallipoli or Salonika or both), and an Air component (2 Wings, 1 operating at Army level and one supporting the Corps). The campaign had significant geographic, meteorological and logistic challenges which were militated and mitigated against by sound planning and staff work (rail, water pipelines, camels, horses). At the Tactical level there was gas (although the Turks didn't notice it much) and lots of animals (over 120k quadrupeds in Nov 17). There were irregular forces (Lawrence and his band of Arabs). And last but not least there were 8 tanks - because a day without a tank is a day wasted!

And finally, who was the missing Yeoman mentioned in the opening paragraph and what happened to him? Trooper Charlie Bookham enlisted in the Westminster Dragoons at the encouragement of his fiancée who he subsequently married on Christmas Day 1915. His younger sister Lillian Grace Bookham was a bridesmaid. After training, and quite possibly after



Jools Whippy in Allenby Park, Beersheba

some time in Ireland, Charlie ended up in Egypt in A Squadron who, by April 1917, were 74th (Yeomanry) Division's reconnaissance squadron. On 26 May 17 he set out on patrol in the vicinity of Tel Jemmi but neither Charlie nor his horse returned and they were listed



Gareth Davies at Tel Jemmi

as missing. Charlie's name is on the Jerusalem Memorial, one of 3315 men from the operations in Egypt and Palestine who have no known grave. We took Charlie's niece Ann (Lillian's daughter) to Tel Jemmi and described the situation surrounding his disappearance but this wasn't enough for Clive, he wanted to find out more for Ann. He did some deep digging and found a passing reference to a letter written by A Squadron Commander to the wife of a missing trooper. There was only one married trooper in A Squadron who went missing, Charlie. Armed with this information Charlie's niece has been able to track down the letter and find out even more about the uncle she never knew and his final patrol.



Clive at the 60th Div Memorial in Jerusalem

THE WAR TO END ALL... GUIDING

Bruce Cherry

November 11th 2018 will not only bring to an end four years of Great War commemoration, and heightened battlefield interest, it may also bring to an end what have been golden years for many guides. This may have been, for some, the war to end all guiding.

Without doubt, for those who are in the 'battlefield business', the next few years are going to present commercial challenges, and if individuals and organisations do not take the necessary actions now, they too will be consigned to 'history'.

This short article is designed to get you thinking, nothing more. The intention is to establish theoretical guidelines for those unfamiliar with the 'business of guiding'. Everyone should eventually have their own plans of attack, and as no two guides will be coming from the same point, no plans will be the same. There is no golden bullet or 'one size that fits all'. But everyone is facing the same 'enemy'. We are all about to have to make the jump from facing the demands of a relatively predictable and static line to the highly unpredictable war of movement.

Military and marketing strategy share some basic principles; setting achievable objectives, developing a plan based on resource capabilities, a strong knowledge of the ground to be taken, and delivering this plan tactically while ensuring communications and feedback assist in allowing flexible change. IGBG members should, in theory, thus be better placed than most in rising to these challenges. Colleagues having a good understanding of corporate and strategic marketing can stop reading now, but what about those colleagues who do not have this training or background and fail to see the similarities between military and corporate strategy and planning? Are you prepared, or preparing for the future?

It is time to refocus from the issues that dominate our every-day guiding activity, the 'tactical delivery' of a tour, and to start thinking about strategy.

So, where to begin? Firstly, medium to long-term objectives need to be decided on. Where do you want to be in the next five years? For some, guiding will always be simply a passion and revenue generated may be little more than marginal 'pocket-money' perhaps subsidising that passion. For others, it is a business and there is an imperative to secure the commercial future. Your strategy starts with a clear and realistic

understanding of where you are on this spectrum.

But it is of little use having objectives without the resources required to action any planned way of achieving them. We are justifiably critical of the Gallipoli campaign, and so many others, where resource needs fell below what was required for an initial success, breakthrough or follow-up. But can we apply this criticism to our own 'advances'?

It is imperative that a hard assessment is made of your resources; time, finance and knowledge. It has to be realistic, too. When it comes to the last resource, knowledge, some may feel that holding the IGBG Badge offers something of a guarantee, for example. But realistically, the more badged guides there are, the more competition for the shrinking market there will be. Equally, will holding a badge guarantee a post-Brexit France still guarantees freedom of access to the battlefields, or will the French and other local guides demand protection from our competition?

You'll notice, the phrase 'planned way to achieve' is used above; it is not a throw-away phrase. Planning, and in a formal manner, is absolutely vital.

Once you've assessed your current position, and decided where you want to see yourself in three to five years, you need to do some research. Time for the intelligence corps to do its bit. Once again, we are critical of the lack of maps underpinning the Gallipoli landings, the lack of information about Turkish capabilities and their willingness to resist. These same lessons apply to assessing the attack on the future that you may have to make. You need to assess what information you need to underpin your plan and then actually carry out the required reconnaissance. There is simply no substitute for doing marketing research, and thoroughly.

Let's take some examples of information need. The educational sector for example. What are its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. For how much longer will the Great War stay on the national curriculum or war poets prove an attractive field of

study? Are there niches within this market that will remain interested in battlefield visits, like private schools on ‘pilgrimages’? And what lies ahead for those handling WFA tours? Is the WFA itself an aging audience who’ve now largely ‘been there and done that’? And in the family genealogy area, will people be as stimulated into researching their ancestors when TV is not constantly stimulating their interest with documentaries, celebrity stories and plays? Will a shrinking military budget see staff rides cut to the bone?

Moving to the international markets, is Australia still in growth and good for another few years? Can Americans, or even a small segment of them, ever be prompted to discover their particular Great War heritage? What about the Irish? Or the British Asian population?

It may well be that in a saturated and shrinking market, some guides may well have to completely alter their strategic thrusts; Great War experts reinvent themselves as Peninsular War specialists, perhaps? Those delivering generalised tours may have to start thinking ‘themes’ in a more inventive way than now – though remembering that it is easier to think of a theme than a market for it! Really radical thinking may be needed and this emphasises why ‘time’ becomes such a critical resource.

Few of us have the resource capabilities to achieve a breakthrough all along the line so there is a need to target resources precisely. In business terms this means choosing and understanding a particular market segment. It is also essential that you really understand why you get the current business you do, and what might affect that from new competition to changes in demand. You’ll want to hang on to what you’ve got for as long as is possible so armouring your rear before advancing is a bloody good tactic!

And when you’ve completed these critical and time consuming tasks, you can then design the plan. The classic ‘marketing mix’ of ‘product, promotion, price and place’ decisions come in play in the same way a military plan integrates all arms or services as required. Knowing your objectives, the ground, and your own resource limitations, should make sure that you at least have a chance of succeeding, even if this well-prepared plan breaks down at first contact and needs quick revision!

The end, if not of guiding in particular then at least of specific areas that have been ‘cash cows’, is in sight. Whether the war ends in 1918 or 1919 or 1920, peace is about to break out.

Are you ready for it?

FIELD*guides*



Northampton Guide - Accredited Member Tom Dormer led the Guild’s wreath-laying ceremony at St. Symphorien CWGC Cemetery. (Photo: John Harris)

EXPLORING WARTIME WOOLWICH

Steve Hunnisett

Although I'm proud to be an Associate Member of the Guild, I do sometimes feel a bit of a fraud as my particular type of guiding doesn't involve travelling to the more exotic places that I read about in Despatches or the various social media feeds of the colleagues whom I follow on Twitter and Facebook.

There are no muddy fields (well not often) for me, or now peaceful sandy beaches that once echoed to the sounds of battle, for 'my' battlefield is the urban one that is London, which from 1940-45 saw the citizens of the then largest city in the world very much in the front line. From the initial minor skirmishes on the edges of London during the Battle of Britain in August 1940, the Night Blitz erupted on 'Black Saturday' 7 September 1940 and included an initial fifty seven consecutive nights when the capital was bombed. Even though London was granted a respite after the night of 10/11 May 1941, sporadic raids continued and the V-Weapons campaign from June 1944 tested the morale of the war-weary Londoners still further.

I started guiding in 2010, encouraged by fellow Guild member, friend and Charlton Athletic supporter (we all have our crosses to bear) Clive Harris. Clive suggested that I initially research and plan a walk in my immediate locality of Blackheath and Greenwich and after I had done this and successfully guided my first group, I found that I had well and truly caught the bug!

An attractive website built courtesy of a graphic designer friend proved a Godsend and I found my customer base building gradually, starting with interested locals, then school and college groups from around the world and more recently Force Development Days from the RAF and British Army, all of whom have a common interest in London's wartime history.

Guiding in London presents differing challenges, not the least of which is planning ahead to ensure that there are no major events entailing road closures on your route on the day you're guiding. I did once get caught out by a visiting head of state being met at Horse Guards Parade by The Queen. This caused the Mall to be closed at the exact moment I was planning on crossing with my small family group from the USA but some help from a friendly Police Officer ensured that my group saw the Queen up close on a day when hardly anyone else was around. The middle-aged lady



Steve guiding his group in front of the Royal Artillery Barracks

who had organised the group was beside herself with joy at this bonus sighting of Her Majesty and her immortal words "Well she's our Queen too!" still causes me to chuckle some years after the event. On a more serious note, apart from the everyday dangers of ensuring my groups cross the road only at approved pedestrian crossings and don't go wandering off alone, we now have to be aware of the potential for terrorist attacks and I for one, have developed an additional wariness following the attacks in Westminster and London Bridge, both of which locations feature regularly in my walks.

One of the joys of doing this job is developing short bespoke walks, often as part of local events in London. Quite recently, I got involved with my local Charlton & Woolwich Free Film Festival and was asked to develop a short Blitz Walk in Woolwich to support the open air screening of the classic war film Battle of Britain at the Royal Garrison Church of St George in Woolwich, itself bombed out as a result of a V-1 incident in 1944. I was happy to oblige, especially as the route was within walking distance of my own home. Most of my walks – or rather strolls as they should be more accurately called – are of around 2 hours 30 minutes duration but for this

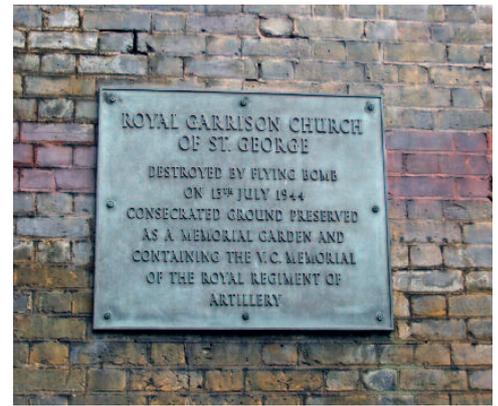


Church Parade at the Garrison Church in Victoria times (author's collection)

one, the organisers wanted something shorter and I settled on a 45 minute affair with a small number of stands on a roughly circular route starting and finishing at the Garrison Church.

Come the evening of the walk, that other great factor in any outdoor event – the weather – decided to take a hand and although the rain was fairly light at the start of the walk, by the time we finished, it was positively teeming down. Another good tip for guiding in London is to always try and plan your walk with stands that provide as much shelter as possible, such as in covered walkways or beneath the overhangs of buildings. This is a good idea not only when rain is threatened but on the rare days in London when the sun is beating down. Finding such places to shelter can be easier said than done but even a brief respite from the elements does help enormously, although I do find that most of my walkers are pretty hardy souls who are well-prepared for most weather conditions. School groups tend to postpone in extreme weather conditions and this is quite understandable, although sometimes frustrating when done at short notice. An amicable re-arrangement is usually swiftly negotiated and this is a major advantage I have compared to groups travelling to European battlefields, in so far as most local schools are able to re-arrange their tours for when the weather is friendlier.

We started at the Garrison Church, which although now essentially an open air venue still has areas where one can shelter from the elements. The church dates from 1862-63 and was built on the instructions of Lord Herbert, the then Secretary of State for War in order to provide “moral well-being for the soldiers of the Royal Artillery” and was part of a more general response to criticism aimed at the Government of the day following the Crimean War, when the lack of modern facilities for the British Army came to the attention of the British public. The building was the work of the architect Thomas Wyatt, assisted by his brother, Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt and served the



Plaque explaining the fate of the Royal Garrison Church, Woolwich

Shrapnel damage still clearly visible at the Garrison Church



Royal Artillery for many years. It suffered blast damage from a Zeppelin raid during the Great War but during the following conflict, the church suffered more serious damage to the northwest corner on the night of 9 March 1941 when no fewer than seven high explosive bombs fell in the immediate area of the adjacent barracks and the church. Shrapnel damage from these bombs can still be clearly seen on the marble columns at the main entrance to the building. The real killer blow to the church however, came during the early evening of 13 July 1944, when a V-1 Flying Bomb exploded very close to the building, causing extensive damage to the roof and upper levels, which were subsequently demolished for reasons of safety. Given the deadly potential of these weapons, it was fortunate that there was only one fatality, a local gentleman who was unlucky enough to be passing by when the bomb fell. There was extensive blast damage caused to a wide area, much of which already bore the scars of four years of war.

We next paused in front of the magnificent Royal Artillery Barracks, built between 1776 and 1802 and which at 329 metres contains the longest single architectural frontage in London. Apart from the blast damage caused by the bombs and subsequent V-1 attack mentioned above, the barracks also suffered extensive damage from incendiary bombs dropped on 19 April

1944, in what was to prove the final occasion that Luftwaffe aircraft raided London.

The group then continued to cross the footpath running adjacent to the Parade Ground, before turning right into Repository Road, where we paused beneath the large trees outside the main entrance to the barracks. Here on the lawn, is a small memorial stone, placed in 2009 by the Shoreham Aircraft Museum to the memory of Flight Lieut. Robin McGregor 'Bubble' Waterston, a pilot with 603 Squadron based at RAF Hornchurch, who was shot down in his Spitfire in the early evening of 31 August 1940 during a major air battle over Southeast London. Robin's nickname came from his reputed likeness as a youngster to the angelic boy of Millais' famous painting. In reality, he was a well-liked personality within his squadron who would think nothing of rolling up his sleeves to help his fitters work on his Spitfire. His squadron had only just been transferred into 11 Group and moved to Hornchurch four days previously. A German Bf109 flown by Oberleutnant Walter Binder of 4.KG76 – not thought to be responsible for Robin's death – was also brought down locally in the same air battle and came down in nearby Plumstead.

We then moved on to pause outside Mulgrave Primary School, now a modern facility but in 1941, a typical brick built building of the LCC Schools Board. The pupils of the school had been evacuated to Wrotham in Kent and in common with many such school premises at the time, the vacant buildings were in use as Station 42W of the Auxiliary Fire Service. The school buildings had already suffered severe blast damage on the night of 19 March 1941 when a parachute mine had detonated nearby but were then almost completely destroyed a little over a month later when a high explosive bomb fell on the school on the night of 20 April 1941. Three firefighters were killed, Auxiliary Firewoman Lilian Baker, 18 year-old AFS Messenger Francis McDonough and Station Officer Charles Burden. The war artist Bernard Hailstone was a member of the AFS who was stationed at Mulgrave Place for a while and his painting of the aftermath is now on display at the Greenwich Heritage Centre.

Along the way, we had also discussed the work of the Bomb Disposal Squads, the ARP Wardens and visited the site of a redundant church damaged in the



Memorial to Robin McGregor 'Bubble' Waterston of 603 Squadron RAF



'Bubble' Waterston (right) in happier times (author's collection)

early days of the Blitz and subsequently abandoned. All of these stands were supported by archive photos for a 'then and now' perspective and by many period props which came out at various points for the group to inspect, with the ARP Warden's steel helmet the most sought-after as it provided the unprepared with some head protection against the rain!

A now decidedly damp group returned to the reasonably dry surroundings of the Garrison Church, to take shelter beneath the canopy and take advantage of the bar (yes, they had a bar there as the church is a wedding venue) and prepared to watch our film entertainment. Despite the weather, the group of mainly local residents enjoyed discovering the wartime past of their own area and learned something of what the Londoners of the Second World War contended with on a nightly basis.



Bernard Hailstone's painting of Mulgrave School in 1941 (author's photo from original at Greenwich Heritage Centre)

AN AUSTRALIAN SUMMER

HOW A MESSAGE FROM THE GUILD CHAIRMAN LED TO A TRIP TO DEEPEST NORFOLK, A 10 DAY RECCE ON THE WESTERN FRONT AND A SUMMER IMMERSSED IN THE 'ANZAC LEGEND'

Mark Riddiford

It started with a Twitter message: towards the end of July, Mike Peters contacted me regarding a possible tour that he thought would suit me. Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours, one of Australia's biggest operators, had a walking tour coming up in September and were in need of a guide. Aware of my enthusiasm for walking the battlefields, Mike had mentioned my name to them and after a couple of early morning Skype conversations with Sydney I was booked to guide a group of Australians on a seven day walking tour of the Western Front. At this point a sense of mild panic started to descend - I have spent many hours (days/weeks/months?) walking the battlefields of the Western Front but never from a purely Australian perspective. I had just six weeks to prepare a week's worth of Aussie themed walks and improve my knowledge of Australia in the First World War to the required level.

However, that six weeks was about to become just four. Just a couple of days after speaking to Mike I had a call from former Guild Membership Secretary, Jo Hook. It appeared MMBT were also in need of a guide for a more traditional 'Explorer' tour, a four day minibus-based trip to the major ANZAC sites, and Jo had kindly suggested my name to the office in Sydney. This tour began at the end of August - the mild panic now started to intensify. Then the camaraderie of the Guild came into play. Jo invited me to Norfolk to discuss all things Australian and after a very pleasant evening in the White Horse Inn with Jo and Mr and Mrs Peters debunking some ANZAC myths I headed confidently back home to the West Country to start planning the walks.

The itinerary provided by the tour company told the clients which battlefield they would be visiting on which day and suggested some approximate distances, but beyond that the actual walks were left to my discretion. Using my existing knowledge of the area I started by using Google Earth to map out some possible routes, with the ability to measure the routes particularly useful. Referencing my routes to some Anzac guide books (Pedersen and Roberts 'Anzacs on the Western Front' being particularly useful) soon gave me a list of potential walks that would allow the clients to get a real taste of the Australian battlefields, as well as placing the actions within the context of the bigger picture.

Clearly, tracing a map on a computer is no substitute for walking the ground so, always happy for an excuse to visit the Battlefields, boots were



Mark Riddiford setting the scene for the day ahead.

packed and off I marched (with the aid of DFDS) to the Front. Walking the routes I had so carefully plotted at home soon identified any particular issues: crops that had been sown across footpaths, fields that turned into swamps after any rain - but also allowed me to tweak them to add in interesting diversions to craters/bunkers/trenches that the casual walker may have missed. By the time of my recce I had been supplied with clients' relatives details so was able to identify spots that I knew my clients would be keen to visit, check them for accessibility and incorporate into the walks where possible. On any tour, time is usually the biggest enemy, so understanding how long each walk would take

would be crucial. However, I had to allow for the fact that, although I was very familiar with these places, my clients would be experiencing them for the first time and would undoubtedly want to linger where I might march on.

The Explorer Tour was a great introduction to guiding Australians and was a huge success but the Walking Tour a week later was always going to be the bigger challenge. A combination of some intensive reading, the recce and great help from Guild colleagues meant that by the time I was boarding the Eurostar to Paris I was confident that I had planned the perfect Aussie walking tour. All I now needed was kind weather and a good group, up for a challenge to both their leg muscles and to any possible preconceptions they may have about the 'Anzac legend'. At the welcome dinner that evening it soon became apparent that the nine guests were more than ready to take on both challenges and the following morning we set off for Peronne looking forward to a great week.

Chronologically, the first stop being Mont St Quentin makes no sense but geographically it is ideal. It also presents a good introduction to the tour as the short walk takes in some great battlefield views and VC sites plus clear evidence of the fighting still within the wood in terms of trenches, shell holes and bunkers. Standing in the sunken lane on the site of Lt. Towner's VC action the group quickly realised that this was going to be something different to the conventional memorials and cemeteries tour. As we climbed back on to the minibus I could sense a real buzz of excitement at what they had just experienced, and what the coming week would bring.

Leaving Peronne, we were due to head north to Ypres, via Hill 60. I also hoped to call in at Buff's Bank, the site of Lt. Bethune's famous order including the ominous line: "if the section cannot remain here alive, it will remain here dead, but in any case, it will remain here." Unfortunately, a national strike in France had led to truckers blocking the A1 just north of Bapaume and also north of Arras so we diverted across the old Cambrai battlefield to pick up the A26. The extra travel time, together with the deadline of a Menin Gate ceremony, meant that Buff's Bank had to be dropped from the plans.

On arrival at the Flanders Lodge, our hotel for the next three nights, it was apparent that the pre-ordered wreath was nowhere to be seen. A quick call to the florist confirmed they had delivered it to the wrong hotel but they did manage to pick it up and get it to us in time for our departure for the Gate. Selecting two of the group to lay the wreath was

straightforward: of the nine members of the group only Julie had a relative commemorated on the Gate so she and Mark, a Vietnam veteran of 26 years service, had the honour.

The next day saw our first big walk, in fact the longest of the tour. At approximately 16km the Messines walk was to prove a challenge to some members of the group, not helped by strong winds and squally showers, but it simply made the evening beers even more welcome. Starting and finishing in Messines village, we took in both the New Zealand and Irish Memorial Parks before heading to Ploegsteert Wood and returning through the area attacked by the 4th Division on the afternoon of 7 June 1917. A picnic lunch was taken in Ploegsteert Wood Cemetery - possibly controversial but I chose this spot as it has a stone bench seat built into the wall and allowed time for individuals to quietly explore the cemetery and reflect on what they had learnt in the morning.

Day three was all about Third Ypres. The minibus dropped us in Zonnebeke so we could join the old railway line at the station and follow the advance of 2nd Division on 4 October. Passing through all of the 'D' crossings we passed the site of Clarence Jefferies' fatal assault on an MG post on 12 October before



Mark Riddiford talking at Toronto Avenue Cemetery in Plugstreet Wood.



Crest Farm, explaining the other Dominion involvements in Third Ypres

arriving in the centre of Passchendaele village. We then made our way via the Canadian memorial at Crest Farm back to Tyne Cot to meet the bus. This section of the walk was perfect for explaining the importance of the Bellevue Spur to the attack and the New Zealanders' terrible experience on 12 October. We were also able to discuss Lewis McGee who won his VC in the fields in front of Tyne Cot, was killed in the field behind and is now buried in the cemetery itself.

Lunch at Johan's café was followed by a stroll around Polygon Wood, particularly paying attention to Pompey Elliot's 15th Brigade actions on the right flank that 'saved the British army'. Keen to explain some of the other aspects of the fighting in the Salient we then headed across to Vancouver Corner and on to Langemarck before a long day ended back at the hotel bar. Another 12 km walked today.

After three nights in the Salient we next headed south; our first stop was Fromelles. Beginning our walk at the Memorial Park, we soon turned off the road to follow the Laves brook into the heart of the Sugar

Loaf. My plans to walk across no man's land to the Australian lines were scuppered by a freshly ploughed muddy field and no sign of any path, so we walked back to the road and then turned left by the farm at the Petillon crossroads. This put us very close to the area of the 60th Battalion advance and was particularly moving for one member of the group whose great uncle was in the 60th and lay out



Explaining VC Corner Cemetery, Fromelles



Julie reading her relative's letters at Mouquet Farm

wounded for two days - afterwards invalided home, his war was over. The freshly ploughed fields did provide ample opportunity for 'souvenir hunting' and most of the group found some shell fragments or shrapnel balls. The significance to Australians of some relics from the Fromelles battlefield meant these were destined to be shown with pride to friends back home. From Fromelles, it was down to Bullecourt and although the official itinerary did not call for a walk here I think this is such an interesting battlefield it rewards spending some time on it. All bar one of the group were in agreement (he decided to visit the museum in the village instead). From the church we walked via the Sunken Lane jump off point, down the Central Road and then Diagonal Road back to the Digger memorial and the centre of the village. This took us a couple of hours and was followed by a well deserved beer in 'Le Canberra', scaring away a couple of startled Frenchmen who had been quietly sipping their pastis at the bar. 15 Km added to the total today.

Our hotel for the next couple of nights was to be the Holiday Inn, Arras and with a full day ahead I asked the group to be ready for a 07.45 departure to the Somme. I arranged for the driver to arrive in Pozieres from the direction of Albert to help set the scene for our walk but the fog was so thick we could have arrived from the moon and nobody would have known. Our walk began at the 1st Division memorial and took us to the left of the village up towards the OG lines. Using a combination of war diaries and Linesman we tracked down the location of Sydney

Street trench where one of Julie's relatives was killed in August 1916. At the Windmill much disgust and opprobrium was hurled at the recently installed animal memorial before we crossed the main road to walk the sector close to where Pozieres Trench met OG1. Then down the sunken lane towards Contalmaison before turning right at Casualty Corner and following the path past the Chalk Pit and back to our start point. This was our last lengthy walk and was a good 11 km to finish with. After lunch we stopped at Mouquet Farm where Julie read out an account of the action from another relative who had been badly wounded on 26 August 1916. Again we were able to identify almost exactly where he had been wounded. The rest of the day had been left flexible and given the option the group commendably decided they wanted to spend some time learning more about the non-Australian action, in particular 1 July, so Lochnagar, Beaumont Hamel and Thiepval finished the day.

Our final day involved the 1918 battles south of the River Somme. Immediately on leaving the motorway at Villers-Bretonneux we called in at Crucifix Corner Cemetery. As well as giving great views over the battlefield towards Lancer and Hangard Woods it is also a great place to demonstrate the international nature of the fighting in the area with the cemetery containing Moroccan, French, Russian, British, Canadian and Australian graves. After a visit to the Victoria school museum we stopped at the Australian National Memorial on

the old Hill 104. Here an interesting discussion took place comparing the amount being spent by the Australian government on the new Monash centre compared with the UK's total spend on the 14-18 Centenary. From here we moved on to Le Hamel where a picnic lunch was eaten at the Australian Memorial Park - I had suggested to the group that they purchase baguettes from the Pomme de Pain at Arras station before we left that morning but the preponderance of croissants and pain au chocolats indicated that some of the group had chosen instead to stock up from the breakfast buffet!

From Hamel, quick stops at the 3rd Division memorial, Red Baron crash site and Corbie set us on our way back down the A1 to Paris and the end of our tour. I estimated we walked well over 50km during the week and the group all thoroughly enjoyed getting out onto the battlefields and getting a greater understanding of what happened, where and when. As a group of Australians, the focus was always going to be on their operations, but this group were equally keen to hear about the other allied actions; they listened intently at Fromelles as I talked about the action of 1914 and 1915, wanted to understand the British involvement at Bullecourt and how Pozieres sat within the overall context of the 141 days of the

Somme. They were, however, harder to convince that the Australians may not have singlehandedly saved the Empire at Villers-Bretonneux.

My approach to delivering information and stands was quite simple: each morning a map session was used to explain where we were going that day from both a geographical and chronological perspective. I used the time on the minibus to give the background and overview of the battles we were about to walk whilst passing detailed maps around. On arrival at the walk start point another orientation took place before we started the walk. From then on I tended to talk to individuals or small groups as the walk progressed, only stopping to call the group together at points of particular interest/importance. This allowed each walker to go at their own pace and either chat to me/other walkers or just be alone with their thoughts. Having the digitised Linesman trench maps on my tablet was a huge benefit as it enabled us to identify exactly where we were in relation to the battlefields of 100 years ago.

I would like to thank Guild Chairman Mike Peters for the initial recommendation and Jo Hook for invaluable help with planning an Anzac tour. Thanks also to Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours for their



The group on the 'road to Passchendaele'

JOURNEY'S END

THIS PRODUCTION IS WORTH A TRIP TO BELGIUM – *The Daily Telegraph*

Sally Woodcock

For the first time in its history, classic trench play JOURNEY'S END gets its homecoming in the very place which inspired it a century ago. The acclaimed production, which showed at Ypres' Gunpowder Store (Het Kruitmagazijn) in Belgium last Autumn, returns to the Ypres Salient later this year in the run up to Armistice Day, 10 October to 12 November.



Journey's end - Kruitmagazijn Photo: Josh Macmillan

The play is set in March 1918 over three days leading up to the German launch of Operation Michael in the Somme. It tracks events in a dugout yards from the front line, newly-occupied by a company of officers as they anticipate the attack, with comings and goings from Colonel, Sergeant Major and Batman/cook Private Mason. Lead character Captain Stanhope, first played by a young Laurence Olivier in 1928, is troubled by the new arrival of his boyhood pal 2nd Lieutenant Raleigh who has managed to pull nepotistic strings with the General to fill a recent vacancy in Stanhope's company. The resulting story is, as the Telegraph said of it in a Five Star review, "ever-enthralling, good-humoured and finally heart-rending."

Audience after audience in Ypres gave it standing

ovations; glowing tributes from the Remembrance / guiding community and across social media are still pouring in. The Telegraph said, "It might sound like the height of extravagance to recommend crossing the Channel for a few hours of theatre, but it honestly feels like paying the bare-minimum tribute."

The play's director Sally Woodcock discusses why this production had such impact: "I think it's a combination of factors. They say good directing is 90 per cent casting: my job was largely done for me by a superb company of 'period perfect' actors who brought with them a passion and knowledge for the subject which elevated it to a new level. We had 1300 submissions for 10 parts, so we were drawn to those who wrote to us personally to express their enthusiasm and this paid off. I could feel the magic happening in the rehearsal room

from day one. These guys hadn't just done their homework, they had inhabited it – they knew exactly where to hang their packs, what was in them, when to take off their hats – correction 'helmets' – so we had plenty of time to excavate the text for every ounce of meaning. Secondly, the play is a classic for a reason: it's a brilliantly-crafted story with a lively cast of characters who strike real chords for people, especially soldiers, because it was written by a soldier and that authenticity is unmistakable. One visibly moved ex-serviceman who's been Battlefield-guiding for 25 years said, 'I'll never walk past a 2nd Lieutenant's headstone again without seeing what I've just seen in there. Everyone should see it.' Add to that a momentous point in time – the Centenary of Passchendaele in which the play's author RC Sherriff was himself wounded; and iconic place – a cavernous 200-year old building in its very own 'Flanders Field', a 10 minute walk from the Menin Gate; and you have something unforgettable. Visiting the Battlefields combined with the play had an impact which audiences weren't quite prepared for. People found themselves literally speechless, decorated war vets walked out shaking their heads in recognition and disbelief. But that's what live theatre does: it gives you a direct line to lived experience – the 'whiff of cordite' as our very own Mike Peters would put it – which has a potency like nothing else."

Woodcock's favourite tributes have been what she calls "the sublime and the ridiculous". The 'sublime' in the form of an old-fashioned personally hand-written letter from General Sir James Everard KCB CBE, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, no email address in sight: "We came and saw Journey's End last Saturday. Perfect location and we loved the production. It captured the atmosphere, tensions, humour and tragedies of trench life brilliantly. We teach all young officers that war is a trial of moral and physical strength, shaped by human nature and subject to the complexities, inconsistencies and peculiarities which characterise human behaviour. We

also tell them – and they learn – that any view of the nature of war is incomplete without the consideration of the effects of danger, fear, exhaustion and privation on the men and women who do the fighting. For me this is what Journey's End – on the eve of the 1918 German Offensive – captures so well."

The 'ridiculous' was from a school girl who also sent a hand-written card, "Thank you for the moving, captivating and amazing play. And sorry for crying so much at the end."

**'Journey's End' is now on sale at
www.meshtheatre.com/tickets.
10 October to 12 November 2018
at Kruitmagazijn, Esplanade,
Ypres, Belgium**



Tom Kay, John Rayment, Alex Tol Photo: Steve Edwin Photography



Tom and Alex final scene Photo: Josh Macmillan Photography

LITERATURE ON THE BATTLEFIELDS

UCL's First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme extends its invitation to teachers of English

Vivien Whelpton

Last year, Simon Bendry, the programme director for the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme, asked me if I would be interested in guiding a new series of tours for the scheme. In order to widen the project's appeal to those schools which had not yet taken up the invitation to participate, the intention was to include some tours with a literary focus, which might be of interest to English departments.

Focus Questions and Focus Texts

David Rich, the National Education Co-ordinator for the scheme, drew up a suggested itinerary and related activities. As with the 'historical' tours, each day was to be organised around a 'focus question'. On the first full day, with an Ypres-based itinerary, the question was to be 'What do we learn about comradeship and division between ranks and matters of military discipline from First World War Literature?' On the second full day, based on the Somme, the question would be 'How Does First World War Literature reflect the changing view of the War as it progressed?' Clearly the latter question would relate chiefly to the combatant poetry of the period, but the scope of the first day's question prompts a further question that demands to be answered: 'What do we mean by First World War Literature: literature of the First World War or literature about the First World War? In the event, the answer was 'both', as the texts to be used for this enquiry were R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End* and Michael Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful*.

Journey's End is an ideal text for the purpose: accessible to the full age range (10 – 18 on the first tour in October 2017), packed with answers to the focus question – and emotionally compelling. We were fortunate in October to be able to take our students to see the excellent Mesh Theatre production of the play performed in the Kruitmagazijn in Ypres; it will be hard on subsequent tours to match that powerful experience, although the company are returning to Ypres in October and November this year, so at least two groups will have the benefit of a



Finn and Holly reflect: two year 13 students from Bourne Grammar School, Lincolnshire

performance. *Private Peaceful* is much more problematic. It is a text used in Key Stage Three classrooms (as is Morpurgo's *War Horse*) but is less appropriate for older students. More importantly, how does one convey an understanding that the view of the War promoted by this text is at times distorting, while not undermining its undoubtedly powerful message and the value in which it is held by the students – and probably their teachers?

Fortunately, the enquiry question was skilfully worded to facilitate this undertaking and through giving the students the contexts to enable them to interrogate extracts, we managed to challenge the novel's representation of military discipline, relationships between ranks, gas warfare etc., while not devaluing its narrative achievements and humanitarian stance. An alternative text that is, or might be, used in the classroom is difficult to find. Whereas the combatant poetry can be accessed by the full age range (and the complete texts made available), particularly given that supportive ratio on these tours of one teacher to two students, once we turn to prose texts – memoirs, fiction and drama – accessibility and familiarity become problematic. Few texts of the period are appropriate for younger students. Perhaps the most accessible is Erich

Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, but, apart from any other considerations, texts in translation are not considered suitable for the English Literature curriculum. On the other hand, many contemporary texts promote an historical reading of the war. This is an issue that can be addressed on a battlefield tour – as we did in the case of *Private Peaceful* – but it has to be done with subtlety and tact! However, there remains the problem that none of these texts is appropriate for the full secondary school age-range. Year 12 and 13 students may be studying Sebastian Faulks's *Birdsong* or Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way*, but neither text can be used with younger students. We issued age-related lists for further and wider reading and circulated some of these books for the students to sample while on the tour, but the problem of finding the ideal texts for closer engagement remains.

If it were not too ambitious a project, involving complications of copyright etc., my own feeling is that the perfect answer would be an anthology for pre-reading which should include some of the excellent short stories of the period, as well as extracts from memoirs. It might even be possible to sell this idea to the examination boards for Key Stage Four!

A further problem, one identified by several of the teachers on the first tour, was ensuring a recognition of cultural diversity. Given that the group of students on the tour was itself ethnically diverse, we were conscious that we needed to address this issue. It can be addressed in historical terms; but in terms of literary texts, we are back to the problem of accessibility, along with the additional one of availability. I have been reading Mulk Raj Anand's moving 1939 novel *Across the Black Waters*, but find it a text that is too 'adult' for our purposes – except perhaps in extract form. I should be grateful for any suggestions from Guild members. Even ensuring that female voices are heard is a challenge on a battlefield tour, where most school groups make, as we did, the token visit to the grave of Nellie Spindler in Lijssenthoek Cemetery. That at least affords the opportunity to reflect on the roles played by women in the War (and to circulate a variety of texts, from Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* to Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet: Stepdaughters of War*). However, the final day of the tour, as with all the tours in the Programme, addresses the question

“Is Remembrance more or less important a hundred years on?” and this allows us to access a variety of texts by women and to acknowledge the burden carried by mothers, wives, sweethearts and daughters during the War and for many years afterwards.

On the Ground

The first tour proved very successful, the wide age range turning out to be one of its most positive features. On numerous occasions the youngest students came up with questions that got straight to the central issues and their enthusiasm infected their more self-conscious elders, while on one particular occasion the impromptu reflections of a Year 13 student on the subversive use of the sonnet form by the combatant poets turned into a much more effective lesson on poetic form for the younger members of the group than I have ever heard a teacher give.

A review of that first tour has thrown up some interesting areas for improvement, some of which relate to any tour (or at least any tour with schoolchildren), others of which are specific to a 'literary' tour. A wet morning on the Somme made us aware of how difficult it is for students to satisfactorily attempt in cold or wet conditions an activity involving reading and writing. A dash to the Ocean Villas Tearooms, where, fortunately, the conservatory was free (and there is now a study centre if required) prompted the decision to build in to future tours (or at least the winter ones) a period 'under cover' on the Somme day. Of course, the whole purpose of a tour like this is to put students on the ground rather than in a classroom environment, so such an interlude has to be time-constrained; one solution is to use that session for the students to consume their lunches while engaged in the activities. Similarly, the constant need to move on had an adverse impact on the opportunities for creative writing that were built into the programme. Talbot House offers an ideal solution: not only are students under cover (and warm) but it is – as we realised on our October visit – a place in which they quickly feel at home. And how much better a stimulus for imaginative writing than a cemetery or trench – both of which encourage all the clichés!

I am very grateful to Simon and to David for giving me the opportunity to participate in this venture and look forward to succeeding tours – and to grappling further with some of these challenges!

Oliver and Daisy show their work: two year 6 students from Abbey Park Middle School, Pershore



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MAJOR DENIS FORMAN

Francesco Di Cintio

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME
ON THE HISTORICAL SITES OF THE GUSTAV LINE.



Enza Campitelli, Antonio Caniglia, Dalila Colanzi, Manola Conicella, Alessio De Camillis, Lorena De Cinque, Maria Chiara De Nobili, Silvia De Nobili, Alex Di Donato, Erica Di Donato, Francesca Di Salvatore, Luca Falcone, Guido Manzi, Antonio Natale, Amon Paride Orsini, Nicolò Renzo Di Lallo, Angelica Sciarra, Simona Sciarra, Alex Scutti, Talone Elia, Alberto Tieri, Matteo Toppi, Marika Travaglini (*students of Istituto Statale d'Istruzione Superiore "Algeri Marino" of Casoli*)

INTRODUCTION (Francesco Di Cintio)

Since its inception, 7 & Geo Tours (a department of Satam Viaggi S.r.l.) has worked to bring the global nature of World War II into the Italian public consciousness by using a multi-perspective approach aimed at the younger generation. Currently, Italian schools usually teach the history of WWII from the dominant perspective of the Italian resistance movement. However, considering the war from its true multinational perspective is important because it allows students to study individual war experiences simultaneously, not in opposition, but in parallel. The Sangro–Aventino Valley is one of the most neglected landscapes of war, but it is rich in the personal stories of the civilians and soldiers connected with the fierce struggles along this Eastern sector of the Gustav Line. The only memories passed down locally are those related to the Gruppo Patrioti della Maiella [Group of Maiella Patriots], later to be called The Maiella Brigade - the only unit of Italian patriots employed as an Italian infantry formation by the Allied 15th Army Group - and the local resistance in general. To rectify this and to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the landscape of war of the River Sangro sector, History & Geo Tours, in cooperation with the Istituto Statale d'Istruzione Superiore "Algeri Marino" (High School of Casoli, led by Mrs Costanza Cavaliere) in 2016 set up a three year long youth apprenticeship programme to study and learn the local issues and the opportunities for battlefield tourism. The main objective of this project is to establish and develop, through a multidisciplinary approach, a battlefield tourism system in this historical area of the Gustav Line. Historical research, geology, archival studies, tourism marketing and battlefield guiding have been merged into a project that will provide new professional skills and experiences to the



The Major of Pizzoferrato, the Guild Members, the Staff of H&G Tours and the students of Casoli at the end of the successful battlefield tour at Pizzoferrato.

students involved: learning to learn, learning to work, learning through working.

In summary, I should like very sincerely to thank the students, Mrs Costanza Cavaliere, Mrs Marina Mastrangelo, Mrs Maria Lucia Di Fiore and Mr Aurelio Manzi (teachers of the High School of Casoli), for their enthusiastic approach and cooperation; to Dr Antonello de Berardinis (Director of Archivio di Stato di Chieti - State Archive of Chieti), Dr. Adele Garzarella (Research Fellow at Department of Engineering and Geology InGeo, University "G. D'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara) and Rob Deere (former British Army infantry officer and accredited member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides). These experts and highly skilled mentors constantly provided support, encouragement, direction, and knowledge to the students. The class involved has been the 3L (now 4L), and the article reported below is the account of their experience during the first year of this pilot project: *From Enemies to Allies. The historical - tourist reassessment of the Sangro - Aventino valley's landscape of war.*

THE MAIELLA IS OUR COMMON MONUMENT

We grew up hearing the stories about the war from our grandparents. Those memories are still vivid in their minds, their eyes still express sorrow and fear when they remember that traumatic experience. The war in the Sangro-Aventino Valley was brutal and the CWGC war cemeteries (Sangro River and Moro River), as well as the sites of civilian executions still evoke the sacrifice of the fallen and the memory of war. However, despite the physical presence of the memory markers, such as the war cemeteries and the monuments, our knowledge of war is dominated only by a national perspective. This project expanded our cultural background, by encouraging analysis of the landscape of war through a multi-perspective and multi-national approach.

The first phase of the project was the study of the complex landscape of the Sangro-Aventino Valley and the Maiella Massif from a geological and geographical perspective. Under the supervision of Dr Adele Garzarella, we started to analyze the terrain features on which the Germans raised the Gustav Line, considering also their impact on the Italian Campaign. During the Italian campaign, the German strategy was organized around the geometric concept of “transverse axis”; which, in military geography, means “a linear configuration of the terrain placed in adverse orientation to the enemy advancing route”. The German doctrine of defense in Italy was consequently based on two pillars:

1. they had a deep knowledge of the alpine “transverse axis” as an adverse element. Most of these lessons were learned during the First World War. In 1943, along these morphological and topographical terrain features, the Germans raised their chains of strongpoints and fortifications. The expression used in military geography to outline an organized system of defences is “line”;
2. they accurately interpreted the role of “comb configuration” of the Italian hydrography and orography. The Germans selected the Sangro-Aventino Valley because the average distance from the Maiella Massif to the Adriatic Sea is about 30/50 km, and the rural landscape is crossed by parallel rivers (such as the Trigno, Sangro, Aventino and Moro), each of which runs in narrow, flat valleys which become extremely muddy in the winter season. Furthermore, behind each river, steep-sided hills slope down towards the sea, making the advance more difficult and slow. To make matters worse, in the Italy of the 1940s, the roads were few and very restrictive being limited to the valleys with only infrequent passes and, during the war, the few roads available were mined or entirely vulnerable to the direct and indirect fire of

the German troops. A natural wall, therefore, suited to delay and channel the Eighth Army’s advance and to control the outcomes of the various battles.

On completion of the first phase, we were taught and mentored by the historian Dr Antonello de Berardinis and supported by Francesco Di Cintio for the British material. They explained the definitions of primary, secondary and tertiary sources. This series of classroom lessons was very important because we were then able to analyse an historical event from several points of view. We worked on the sources related to the wartime experience of Major Denis Forman, company commander in the 6th Battalion the Royal West Kent Regiment (6 RWK) and author of “*To Reason Why*.” We compared this to the official war diary of his battalion which is original material written at the time and, therefore, not filtered through interpretation or subsequent evaluations, with Denis Forman’s colorful accounts, written many years after the event and with the benefit of hindsight and reflection. For example, on 21/22 November 1943 he led his men against a German forward position near Mozzagrogna. His personal account (highly subjective) involves motivation, fear, pain and self-reflection.

His recollections focused on his personal experience by dramatizing the narrative of the historical event. The approach of the official war diary recollection is presented differently, in which actions, administration and activities are reported in chronological order without information about individual personnel.

The third and final tier of this educational programme prompted our first battlefield tour/study visit to some of the historical sites of the River Sangro and Maiella Massif. This ‘lecture in the field’, led by a former British infantry major and accredited member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides, Rob Deere, was a guided walking tour that showed us how a professional battlefield guide is able to bring the operations studied in the classroom to life on the actual ground on which they occurred. After an introduction to the historical background of the British Eighth Army during the Italian Campaign, Rob Deere accompanied us up the gentle hills near Paglieta, a vantage point from which we were able to survey the sector that was entrusted to the 6 RWK. According to Forman’s account, the initial plan was to conduct reconnaissance of the enemy positions on the northern side of the River Sangro, to identify potential tank crossing sites (because both the River Sangro bridges had been blown) and identify which routes the Germans had mined. We learned about and followed the route and activities of a two-man reconnaissance patrol led by Sergeant Knight with Lance Corporal Lingham which was sent out on 14 November 1943. With his mission achieved only Sergeant Knight returned, exhausted, to the company

headquarters on 16 November 1943, Lance Corporal Lingham having drowned on the return crossing of the Sangro. With his experience as an infantryman, Rob Deere clearly explained how a reconnaissance patrol functioned and brought to life the extreme danger and stress faced by these British infantrymen in conducting this highly demanding task in demanding terrain and continuous rain.

Following the original paths, Rob Deere led us to the Red Farm, a battle-scarred rural building located on the escarpment on the northern bank of the River Sangro. This building was selected as the main objective of an assault by Denis Forman's C Company (6 RWK) on 21/21 November 1943. Known afterwards as Forman's Folly, the attack by C Company (6 RWK) was a hazardous action. The assault force found itself caught between two fires and the sergeants commanding the assault groups quickly became casualties. On the actual ground, Rob Deere described the battle, stressing the critical leadership role played by Denis Forman: he was forced to make quick decisions while moving under fire across open ground. He constantly ran from a Bren gun section to an assault squad ordering them, begging them to continue to move towards the target. With only nine men ready for the final assault, and under heavy suppressing fire, Major Forman launched the attack on the Red Farm, which was captured. However, within minutes he was forced to withdraw due to the German counter attack.

After visiting the Red Farm, the battlefield tour continued to the town of Pizzoferrato, which saw the most important operation carried out by Wigforce, a joint military force of British servicemen and Italian auxiliary troops from the Group of Maiella Patriots. This composite military formation, led by Major Lionel Wigram, was tasked to destroy the German garrison at the top of the small village. Here, Rob Deere gave us a clear picture on the concept of mountain warfare during the winter season. On the night of 3 February 1944, Major Wigram launched his assault against the German positions which dominated the valley and the town. However, shortly after the beginning of the attack, Wigram was killed and his unit was soon at the mercy of the German counter-attack coming from the nearby villages. We learned that the Italian patriots and the few remaining British soldiers were forced to retreat rock by rock towards the chapel. With the delayed arrival of reinforcements, Wigforce was surrounded and found itself unable to fight because the chapel's windows were too high to allow them to fire out of whilst the Germans could fire in and post grenades from the rocks outside. In the chapel the walls and columns are still vividly scarred by bullet and fragments, giving testimony to the fierceness of the struggle. Rob Deere really gave us the sense of the awful conditions, claustrophobia and fear of the soldiers trapped and cornered in the chapel, hoping for relief which never came.

Our battlefield tour ended at the CWGC Sangro River War Cemetery. A marker of memory in which history is intertwined with sacrifice and the dead. In a surreal silence, as though impenetrable, Rob Deere brought to life the personal stories of the British soldiers buried in this cemetery. We had all sorts of emotions and feelings running through us as we read the ages of the fallen: 17, 18, 19 years old. More than two thousand tombstones that describe the sacrifice of the Commonwealth nations involved in the conflict. They came from faraway countries to free our land.

At the conclusion of this first-year of the project, we were able to reflect on the ethno-anthropological significance of remembrance tourism: The Maiella Massif is not only the symbol of our WWII heritage but also, linking our experience with the considerations of Geoffrey Bird, it is the geographically 'dis-located' heritage landscape of all the Nations involved in the war.



Pizzoferrato - site of the final Wigforce action



Rob Deere explaining the tactical principles of the mountain warfare (Pizzoferrato)



The Red Farm: the main objective of the Forman's Folly (nearby Mozzagrogna)



Rob Deere explaining the significance of the symbols in Commonwealth Cemetery (River Sangro War Cemetery)



Sangro River War Cemetery

GOD IN BATTLE

Richard Burgess

While regularly guiding individuals on the battlefield or when visiting a holocaust site, people often ask me: “Where was God in this place?” I reply: “Where was man?” When Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, Matthew did so without hesitation (Matthew 9:9).

This exemplifies the power of the saving grace of Christ in that even this man who was seemingly lost, turned his life around the instant that Christ entered it. That example in and of itself provides hope for all of us who fall short of the life we are called to lead.

However, Matthew not only left his previous life, he fully embraced the call of Jesus to preach the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20), including his own.

Similarly, to name but a few, look at the relative examples of Rev Addison, Rev Mellish, Rev Bayley-Hardy, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hitler’s personal prisoner, Martin Niemöller. All answered their call. Let us not forget a man widely acknowledged to be the greatest theologian of the 20th Century, Karl Barth. This man stood against Nazism by preaching the gospel more firmly and vociferously. Here is God?

Matthew’s gospel was written many years after the events that it depicts. However, as with each of the gospel writers, Matthew had a goal in mind when he wrote his account. Matthew hoped to prove to his own people, the Jews, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah referred to in the Old Testament.

As a result, Matthew begins by recounting the genealogy of our Lord, thus proving that Jesus was a descendent of David, and therefore an heir of the Davidic throne. Also, in as many as 65 different places, Matthew refers to specific Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfils. Since the Jewish people hold genealogy and the sacred texts in such high regard, Matthew hoped this would convince them that their Redeemer had indeed come.

The Ravensbrook Prayer, found in the concentration camp on a tiny sliver of paper following liberation reads as follows: ‘O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also of ill will. But do not remember all the sufferings they have inflicted on us; remember the fruits we bought, thanks to this suffering – our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of this; and when they come to judgement, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

There are simply no words within any language that adequately describe the horror of any battlefield or holocaust site. Sassoon describes it as ‘Golgotha’, Hodgson cries ‘Help me to die, oh Lord’ and Kolbe gave his life for another who survived the horrors of Auschwitz. In turn the Nazi regime, through their demonic activities, feared God. They tried to eradicate the living God as if he himself was man, constrained within the limits of time, space and matter.

Amen.’

In this conveyance of faith, made out in the most horrible of circumstances, we are not only spoken to in the literal sense, but also in the spiritual. We can contextualise the circumstances under which this must have been written and quite reasonably assess that something or someone was at work in ordaining what has since become a revelatory text. Even to the non-Christian or non-believer the reader must surely begin to reflect on this work and begin asking questions?

My ministry is to help work through your questions and to share with you the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is no more blessed a place to meet God with me than on the battlefield or in a holocaust site. It is my privilege to stop on tour (or wherever else I am called) and consider ethical or theological questions. I am more than happy to pray with groups or individuals at key points or in private.

Apart from the Ravensbrook Prayer, the second inspirational source I love is the poem ‘Patience’, written by the legendary Geoffrey Anketell Studdert-Kennedy – ‘Woodbine Willie’:

*Sometimes I wish that I might do
Just one grand deed and die,
And by that one grand deed reach up
To meet God in the sky.*

*But such is not Thy way, O God,
Nor such is Thy decree,
But deed by deed, and tear by tear,
Our souls must climb to Thee,*

*As climbed the only son of God
From manger unto Cross,
Who learned, through tears and bloody sweat,
To count this world but loss;
Who left the Virgin Mother’s arms
To seek those arms of shame,
Outstretched upon a lonely hill
To which the darkness came.
As deed by deed, and tear by tear,
He climbed up to the height,
Each deed a splendid deed, each tear
A jewel shining bright,*

*So grant us, Lord, the patient heart,
To climb the upward way,
Until we stand upon the height,
And see the perfect day.*

I view the padres as a group of incredible men within a group of incredible people. Truly, among the bravest of the brave and inspirational as they went about their duties supporting and tending to the dying, the dead and the condemned. They knew death had been defeated through Christ and I truly believe most had no fear. This vital message was often not lost on many soldiers and it is fair to say not all on leave engaged in wine, woman and song?

Before being blown to smithereens at Passchendaele, Fr Willy Doyle is recorded in ministry.

One day a young man was brought in by stretcher to the place where Doyle was working. The young soldier was in hopeless expectation of impending death. His last words to Fr Doyle were: "I don't know your God, Father!"

Instinctively and with immediacy following this confession of faith, with his thick Irish accent, Doyle blessed the soldier and replied: "Aye son, but my God knows you!"

The boy then smiled, sighed and died in a state of grace. Doyle probably held his hand.

MY FAVOURITE *guide source*

I am lucky enough to be in possession of an old Woolworths exercise book and numerous loose sheets of note paper, all covered with ink writing laboriously written out by my Granddad, Sgt John William Brooks, DCM MM of the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade. When my mother was pregnant with me she watched a TV programme called *The Great War*. Mum asked her father in law to jot down a few things in case her 'bump' wanted to know what granddad did in the war. He went to Woolworths, bought himself the exercise book and started writing.

His book starts when he landed at Boulogne on Sunday 23rd August 1914. He talks of the Retirement from Mons, Le Cateau, The Aisne, Battle of the Marne, ending up in Ploegstreet Woods in December 1914. It carries on throughout the war, his time in Ypres, seeing the ruined Cloth Hall, moving down to Albert and seeing the Virgin Mary hanging off the church and the 1st Day of the Battle of the Somme. Then to Mesopotamia, spending Christmas Day 1917 in Baghdad. After the armistice, whilst awaiting to be demobbed in Bombay, he was sent up to the NW Frontier due to an outbreak of trouble.

He wrote of his experience during the 1914 Christmas Truce and nowhere is a football match mentioned! Whenever I take a group to the Footballers memorial outside Ploegstreet Wood I read them this extract to show them what that day was really like there – to hear his words of that day at the actual location is very moving not only for me but for those who listen. It's just the words of an Old Contemptible, not a high-ranking officer or a military historian; written as he spoke, but to me they bring that Truce alive. It also puts a smile on people's faces when the Brigadier is mentioned!

"Next Day was Christmas Day 1914. There was a lot



of shouting across the lines between the Germans and our boys, also some music from the German trenches. One tune put me in mind of our own National Anthem, the music was so much like it. The Germans, I think, were the first to show their heads above the parapet without being fired on. Then our own boys began to show themselves above the trench; then it was all clear to come out and fraternise. They had the whole day at this get together; each side took full advantage of the chance to pick up their dead who had lain out in front in some cases for a month or more. It was a pathetic sight to see our own dead

being brought in, one to each man. They were able to do this owing to the bodies being frozen stiff; they were carried in some cases just like dead mutton. They were brought back and laid out in a row till they were taken away to be identified and buried.

It seems pathetic that two days after giving them a bashing and driving them out of the wood, that the German and British soldiers were able to shake hands, exchange presents, tins of jam, also to show one another photographs of their respective families at home.

In the afternoon, a Brigadier of ours showed up. He had come to have a look round while there was no fighting going on. Anyhow it was the first time I had seen an officer above the rank of Colonel in the front line. The truce ended in our part of the line next morning at daybreak. It seems that the East Lancs on our left had a rough time from the jerries' shortly before Christmas and had some losses. Anyhow they fixed on the enemy when they showed up early Boxing Day. In any case there came an official instruction to the troops to cease fraternising so everybody kept under cover."

Eugenie Brooks

A LESSON LEARNED OR PRIMARY SOURCES

John Hamill

Having joined the Guild in December 2009 and working hard to gain my accreditation as a Badged Guide, I eventually succeeded in passing the final Module I required, in March 2013 at Bletchley Park, after becoming a member of the Referral Club a number of times. Not least due to the thorny issue of primary and secondary sources.

Having been guiding since 2008, and receiving good advice and support from many wise Guild members, I am becoming increasingly confident in my abilities, but this year I was pulled up sharply by one of my customers who had a primary source far superior to any I had studied.

In March 2017, I went on a long and busy recce with a number of other Guides for a Canadian Tour, which was to take place in April. This included not just the many WW1 sites where the Canadians had fought, but also Normandy where they had fought on D-Day, including the River Dives Bridges, to the East of Pegasus Bridge, where the Commandos had operated.

I knew I would not be involved in this part of the Tour. Nonetheless, I paid attention and made notes for future use. When, in September of this year, I was asked by the RBL if I would take a LIBOR Tour of eleven Normandy veterans to the area, I jumped at the chance.

We met at the Victory Services Club on 13 October and boarded a coach for the Channel Tunnel, collecting a number of veterans in Ashford on the way. Unfortunately, two of the party were unable to travel due to ill health. However, the nine that did travel proved to be a lively group, aged 92-96 years old.

Having studied the history of the Units they were in and where they had fought, I planned to visit the various sites that were relevant to them.

We set off for our first full day, driving north east out of Caen towards Dives and then on to the site of

the Merville Battery.

As we progressed through Herouville and past various landmarks, I was providing a commentary, and as we crossed a bridge on the river Dives, I said, "This is one of the bridges blown by our Commandos to prevent the German tanks heading west towards our troops landing on the beaches."

A loud voice behind me replied, "No we didn't because I fell off it into the river to be pulled out by the scruff of my neck. It was the next one up the road we blew!"

Here was the ultimate primary source. Mr John 'Jack' Lamb, Trooper in number 3 Commando, who had been part of the Commando group which had been tasked with destroying the bridges.

The rest of the day passed off well with one very notable incident, which the whole party will never forget.

When we arrived at Sword Beach late in the afternoon, it was quite foggy. The party had vacated the coach to visit the beach. As they were looking out to sea, a young French woman in her late teens with

her parents in tow asked to speak to the veterans.

She shook each by the hand and said most sincerely, "Thank you all so very much for what you did for us on the 6 June 1944."

I don't think there was a dry eye in the party when she departed.

That evening, I had the privilege to speak to each of the veterans individually, and asked them to recount their own experience of D-Day. I then asked



The Primary Source, Mr 'Jack' Lamb.

if, when we reached various locations, they would recount their experience for the group. Most were able to do so.

On the last full day of the tour, we ended with a small service led by one of the RBL Trustees, Lt Col David Whimpenny, concluding with the Last Post and Reveille. The Veterans laid wreaths on behalf of their fellow comrades. It was a moving and humbling experience.

This is my last tour of the year, and it was a great finale to my season: I had the privilege of travelling with a great band of veteran soldiers – the ultimate primary source.



The Veterans lay wreaths in the Bayeux Cemetery.

Photos: Roger Kidd

EVENTguide 2018-19

2-4 Mar - Core Weekend & Validation in Shropshire - Anthony Rich

3 Aug - Badged Guides Dinner in London - Graeme Cooper

7-9 Sept - SW Regional Event in Amesbury - Paul Oldfield

22 Sept - Validation Event at Middle Wallop - Chris Finn

19-21 Oct - Verdun Recce - Simon Worrall & Francois Wicart

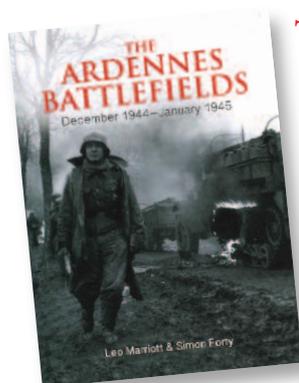
Nov - The Richard Holmes Memorial Lecture in London - Tony Smith

2-4 Nov - Battle of Britain Event & Validation in London - Chris Finn

7 Dec - Christmas Lunch in London - Andy Thompson

1-3 Feb 2019 (TBC) - Annual Conference at Bosworth

GUIDEbooks:



THE ARDENNES BATTLEFIELDS December 1944 - January 1945

By Leo Marriott & Simon Forty

Latest in a series of high quality battlefield guides this latest offering on the Ardennes maintains the standard set by earlier Normandy titles. Narrated

in an easy to follow, chronological and unit-based sequence it is a good entry point for the Ardennes novice. The historical overview flows well and is complemented with plenty of maps; references to memorials and useful aerial photographs add more of the essential detail required for battlefield guiding. Thumbs Up!

Review by Mike Peters

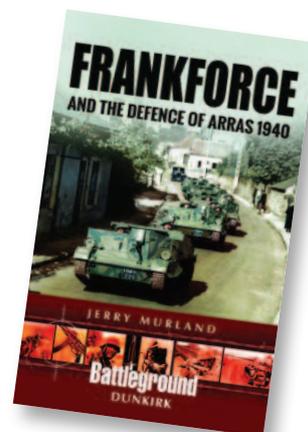
Published by Casemate
RRP £25.00
paperback, pp192

FRANKFORCE The Defence of Arras 1940

By Jerry Murland

I have never understood why Arras does not attract more interest among tour operators and guides. Sadly, too many view the city solely as a jump off point for the Somme's July 1916 battlefields. There is so much more to Arras than that in both wars, and this excellent new guide is the ideal introduction to the even less visited 1940 battlefields that surround Arras. This latest battleground guide offers a well-balanced mix of anecdotes; maps and photographs linked with a readable historical narrative make this a welcome addition to the WW2 guiding library.

Published by Pen & Sword Ltd
RRP £12.99
paperback, pp176

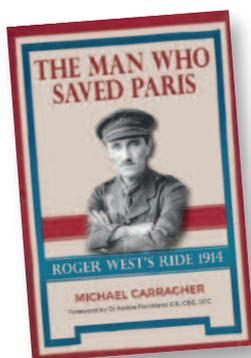
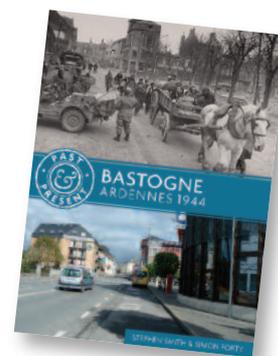


BASTOGNE ARDENNES 1944 Past & Present Series

By Steven Smith & Simon Forty

This is one of a series of new Past & Present WW2 guides released by Casemate; other titles focus on divisional areas of the Normandy and Arnhem battlefields. The format is very similar to the Osprey softbacks that many members will be familiar with. These are not comprehensive guides but they are well illustrated and easy to follow, at £9.99 I think that they are good value for money and will add value if you are planning a new tour or a recce – a nice to have, rather than essential.

Published by Casemate
RRP £9.99
paperback, pp64



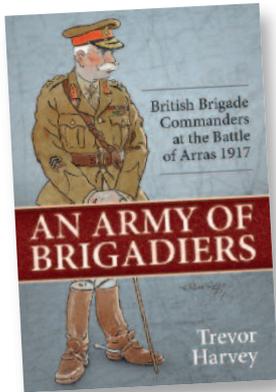
THE MAN WHO SAVED PARIS Roger West's Ride 1914

By Michael Carragher

I find the role of the BEF in the summer of 1914 the most interesting and dramatic chapter of the Western Front, I am also a

lapsed member of the motorcycle community. So, this book based on the diaries of a Despatch Rider with 19th Infantry Brigade was doubly intriguing. I have to say that it is an epic tale written in the language of the time that really brings the days leading up to the Marne vividly to life. The colourful story underpinned with a knowledgeable author's narrative makes for a refreshing ride through history. If ever there was a potential battlefield tour for the two-wheeled guides among us, this thousand miles on the Western Front is it.

Published by Uniform Press
RRP £15.99
paperback, pp237



AN ARMY OF BRIGADIERS

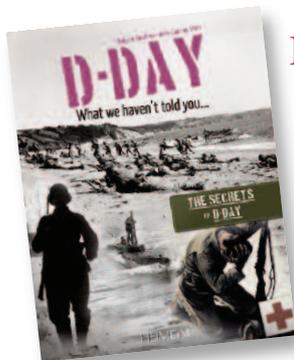
British Brigade Commanders at the Battle of Arras 1917

By Trevor Harvey

There is very little original material on the Great War that is available to the mainstream reader; the new series of books

from the Military History faculty at Wolverhampton University has changed that. This excellent in-depth study of Brigade Commanders, their staff and their performance in battle is superb. The extensive research is comprehensively referenced, supported with data and well illustrated with maps and photographs. Not a light read but a must have for the serious student of the British and Commonwealth Armies of 1917.

Published by Helion
RRP £29.95
hardback, pp431



D-DAY – WHAT WE HAVEN'T TOLD YOU...

The Secrets of D-Day

By Philippe Bauduin & Jean-Charles Stasi

I was a little sceptical about this book when I first saw it,

Normandy Guides will be familiar with the style from the book stands in all of the museums and tourist shops in the region – not heavyweight history at all. That said, I was pleasantly surprised and found this particular book to be quite useful background reading. It is packed with short articles on the myths and folklore of D day, therefore quite useful if you like to share short vignettes and ‘factoids’ with your clients. A refreshing read.

Published by Heimdal
RRP £19.50
paperback, pp128

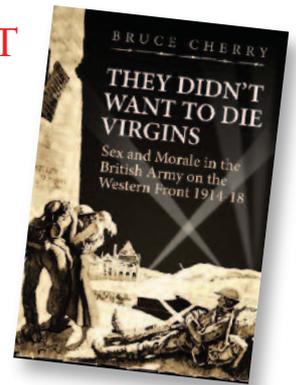
THEY DIDN'T WANT TO DIE VIRGINS

Sex and Morale in the British Army on the Western Front 1914-18

By Bruce Cherry

There is a timeless synergy between the world's oldest professions and yet there is surprisingly little mainstream history available on the subject of sex and its affect on an Army's morale. The industrial scale of the fighting on the Western Front created huge armies, which in turn generated an ever-increasing demand for sex and prostitution. This detailed history examines the nature of sexual behaviour on the Western Front, the huge financial turnover created by prostitution, the impact of STIs on fighting power and the moral implications faced by respective chains of command. A thought-provoking read that really does pose some challenging questions. An essential read if you are going to present a 360 degree history of the BEF on the Western Front.

Published by Helion
RRP £25.00
hardback, pp325



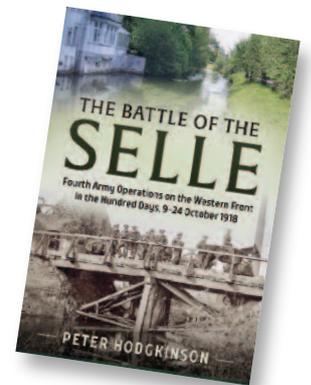
THE BATTLE OF THE SELLE

Fourth Army Operations on the Western Front in the Hundred Days, 9-24 October 1918

By Peter Hodgkinson

Helion Books continue to produce some amazingly detailed books that are ideally suited to the Battlefield Guide researching a new campaign. This new title is a timely arrival if you are about to launch into the new season of FWW Centenary anniversaries. The Fourth Army's activities during the hundred days is long overdue the level of attention lavished on it in this comprehensive account. Highly detailed, chronological and well structured reading supported with an abundance of references, maps and photographs – Excellent.

Published by Helion Books
RRP £26.95
hardback, pp327



10 Questions:

Name: Luuk Buist

Age: 54

Nationality: Nederlander (Dutch)

Home Location: Doorwerth
near Arnhem

Tour Company: Sole Trader

Validating: Accredited, badge No.85



In each edition of Despatches, we will be introducing a member of the Guild. In this edition, it is Luuk Buist.

1. How long have you been interested in battlefields and what was it that initially attracted your interest?

I have been interested in battlefields since I was a young boy. When my father gave me an airborne helmet, the spark was there. Both my parents lived in Oosterbeek during the Battle of Arnhem and my grandfather was one of the civilian casualties. I started to read books on the subject and started to collect memorabilia. My first book was Arnhem Lift by Louis Hagen, whom I met many years later in 1994.

2. Have any experiences stood out? While organising tours for the Army Air Corps I often had one or two glider pilot veterans on the tour. They made the history truly come to life. It was great to see the effect they had on the young cadets and the respect the younger generation had for their veterans.

3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding? Keeping the history alive and adding human elements to the strategic story of a battle. Going the extra mile to give your clients an absolute great experience.

4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why? Weverstraat, junction Fangmanweg and Dr Brevéstraat in Oosterbeek. The spot where Lieutenant Mike Dauncey of the Glider Pilot Regiment was put forward for a Victoria Cross. (On the citation Montgomery turned it down to a DSO) I was very privileged to have Mike on a few of my tours. To the north the houses are great for then and now comparison with wartime German photo's of StuG's attacking Dauncey's position. To the south, east and west the whole area was destroyed. It is a perfect spot to explain the fierce fighting that took place during the battle.

5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future? On my bucket list are trips to Sicily, Monte Casino and Berlin.

6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild? The validation programme which helped me to improve my skills as a guide, and also the bonds of friendship between the guides.

7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why? Very difficult question, I have to make a choice between the Regimental History of the Glider Pilot Regiment, signed by 135 glider pilots whom I all knew, or the helmet my father gave me that sparked my interest.

8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour? Each tour has it's own challenge, however I was once asked to perform a tour for my colleagues at work, a few were interested in the Battle of Arnhem but the majority were not. After a three-hour walk, with some colleagues less loud than normal, the next stop would be the pub. However, during the walk I briefly mentioned the Airborne Cemetery and the group decided unanimously to first pay respects at the Airborne Cemetery before going to the pub. Mission completed... "Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good in flammable stuff, it will catch fire." (*Anatole France*)

9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide? Always prepare, even if you have done a tour many times. Keep it simple and be yourself. Take a genuine interest in the people of the group.

10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour? During a tour with AAC Cadets we had beautiful weather during the day. In the evening we were going to do the Operation Berlin walk. A walk in the dark from divisional headquarters down to the river, with re-enactors acting as guides in the woods. During the introduction talk I referred to the bad weather on the night of 25/26 September 1944. One of the cadets replied he was sorry I could not fix the weather, the same way I had fixed the re-enactors. I looked at him and replied you just wait and see... Five minutes later it was pouring with rain. I just love the weather app on my phone...

NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between December 2017 and the date of publication.

Barry Bromley
Simon Collins
Pierre Coenegrachts
Alessio De Camillis

Silvia De Nobili
Tara Drew
Peter Emery
Adele Garzarella

Martin Gebel
Graham Osborne
Renfrey Pearson
Lance Unwin

Michel Vasko
Victoria Wallace