Gateways to the First World War presents

VISITING AND REVISITING THE WESTERN FRONT 1919-39

Image: Philip Woets

Arts & Humanities Research Council

University of Kent

VISITING AND REVISITING THE WESTERN FRONT 1919-39

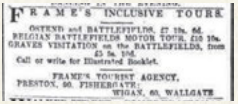
Who went and how did they get there and back?

People from across the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State (as it then was) engaged in visiting the battlefields in France and Belgium during the 1920s and 1930s. Evidence was found of groups travelling from such disparate places as Aberdeen, Belfast, Burnley, Cardiff, Dublin and Truro.

The articles, letters and photographs published in British and Irish regional newspapers make it clear that visits were made by a variety of people and organisations. Some trips were undertaken by individuals and families, some were made by small community groups such as churches, sports or social clubs, which meant that the former battlefields were visited by old and young, men and women. Veterans went in large numbers, sometimes exclusively, and at other times accompanied by their families and friends, often under the umbrella of the British Legion. Contingents of service personnel, schools and even specific trades and occupations also made communal visits. Of course, the precise badge under which a person travelled served to influence the atmosphere of the visit. A company of Territorial soldiers or public school boys attached to an OTC were likely to behave in an entirely different manner to a group made up largely of bereaved mothers, fathers and widows.

Image: Philip Woets

The modes of transport and accommodation varied greatly. In the immediate aftermath of the war the devastated regions of the Western Front could make travel difficult, and some places barely accessible, while the standard of hospitality could be rough and ready. As time passed, and the civilian infrastructure improved, the experience became easier. A significant influence on the experience was the amount each person or group could spend comfortably. For the wealthy, tours could be undertaken with personal drivers and guides. An advertisement in the *Lancashire Daily Post* in July 1920 detailed 'Belgian battlefields motor tour' at £10 10s per person, which was a considerable sum for those living on modest means. In May 1920, the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* carried an advert for the London-based, Franco-British Travel Bureau, informing readers of its 'Battlefields Tour de Luxe', and 'visits to graves by private cars' taken from a 'fleet of high class' vehicles. By contrast, charitable organisations such as the St. Barnabas Hostels, founded to assist poorer people to visit the graves of their loved ones, provided free passages through mass transport methods of trains and charabancs. However, 'free' travel usually meant between London and the battlefields; people had to pay their own way to London first, which could be just as challenging to personal finances.



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FRAME'S TOURIST AGENCY,
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Lancashire Daily Post, 15 July 1920. Image: © British Library (newspaper archive) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk All rights reserved.

The St. Barnabas Hostels and British Legion were the most active in organising large-scale group visits to the battlefields, and their well-publicised 'pilgrimages' were the subject of intensive and extensive press comment and coverage. The *Dover Express* reported nearly 10,000 people passing through its port in August 1928 for the biggest British Legion pilgrimage ever undertaken. It culminated in a service at the Menin Gate memorial to the missing in Ypres in which some 25,000 people participated, including 1400 war widows. According to an editorial in the *Falkirk Herald*, 'the impressive service must have stirred deep feelings in the hearts of the men who returned… and the women-folks of those who lost dear ones on those stricken fields'. As this report reveals, these occasions stirred deep emotions. In many instances the emotional rollercoaster must have been exacerbated by the travel arrangements themselves, for in order to keep costs to a minimum, and thus maximise the numbers able to attend, organisations like the St. Barnabas Hostels ran many of their pilgrimages as day trips.

This meant travelling on the night boat, thus making a restful night almost impossible, followed by much corralling and chivvying as the immense groups were gathered in the right places at the right time. Physical and emotional exhaustion was the likely outcome for all.

Most people would have travelled by train and then onto a cross-channel steamer with the ports of Boulogne, Calais and Zeebrugge the most frequent points of arrival. For many people living in East Anglia and the east coast of Britain, the reopening of Zeebrugge to commercial traffic in May 1920 made visiting the battlefields significantly easier as services were resumed from Hull and Harwich. Remarking on the reopening of the sailings, the *Burnley News* immediately reported that the Lancashire and Yorkshire and North Eastern Railway companies could now offer 'two full days… to visit the battlefields of Belgium'.

Existing and established travel companies, such as Thomas Cook and Henry Lunn, soon adapted their offer to include battlefield excursions, and specialist firms were also established. Former officer, L.P. Cawston, was quick to realise the opportunity, forming the Battlefields Bureau with a head office in London and at the Chateau des Trois Tours in Brielen, a small village just outside Ypres, in 1919. Advertising regularly in the UK national and regional press, he also informed readers that his firm could provide photographs of particular war graves on behalf of family and friends.

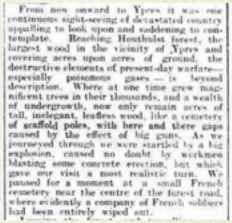
Why did people visit the battlefields?

The newspaper coverage of battlefield visits makes it clear that people undertook the tours for a variety of reasons. The vast majority of the articles highlight poignant stories of personal loss. Tens of thousands went seeking cathartic release by visiting a loved one's grave, place of commemoration or death. For those relatives left without a grave to mourn over, the memorials to the missing were crucial. The *Kirkintilloch Gazette* published a heart-rending poem by a local resident inspired by the unveiling of the Menin Gate memorial. 'Now they sleep in unknown grave', the poem stated of those whose names were inscribed on its walls, before concluding:

> We miss you much, each year much more,
> Your memory dwells in hearts that're sore,
> While o'er your grave the poppies bloom,
> We'll reverence your sacred tomb.
> Farewell! Dear hearts, until we meet;
> Men bare their heads and mothers weep,
> Their sacrifice, like yours, was great,
> We'll ne'er forget your Menin Gate.

By no means a great poem, nor even one with much internal logic, but its emotional charge is palpable; and it was a local paper which gave this writer the platform to channel that grief.

Others visited for far more prosaic reasons creating a distinction between 'pilgrims', meaning those undertaking the visit due to bereavement, and mere 'tourists' referring to those seeking the weird, wonderful and macabre sites of the battlefields. The seventy year old Scottish lady who, it was reported by the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, walked 17 miles to and from her 'local' railway station to join a group tour was most definitely a pilgrim. In complete contrast, on 4 November 1920, the *Nottingham Evening Post* carried a front page story on battlefield visiting headlined 'thoughtless tourists'. The article went on to condemn the 'thoughtless behaviour' of some visitors who were pitching tents and picnicking on ground containing graves in their desperation to see the sights of the battlefields. In reality, the nature of the newspaper coverage makes the distinctions appear far less solid. This can be detected in an otherwise sober and respectful account in the *Banbury Advertiser* in 1921. After reverentially describing the condition of the battlefields, it also contained the frisson of excitement at seeing such things as 'the Tank Cemetery' on the Menin Road, where it was possible to inspect the ruins of 14 tanks at close quarters. Whilst at Zeebrugge, the visitor could see the wrecks of sunken ships and submarines, and at Koekelare and Nieupoort the remains of huge German gun emplacements could be explored.



From now onward to Ypres it was one continuous sight-seeing of devastated country appalling to look upon and saddening to contemplate. Reaching Houthulst forest, the largest wood in the vicinity of Ypres and covering acres upon acres of ground, the destructive elements of present-day warfare—especially poisonous gases—is beyond description. Where at one time grew magnificent trees in their thousands, and a wealth of undergrowth, now only remain acres of tall, inelegant, leafless wood, like a cemetery of scaffold poles, with here and there gaps caused by the effect of big guns. As we journeyed through we were startled by a big explosion, caused no doubt by workmen blasting some concrete erection, but which gave our visit a most realistic turn. We paused for a moment at a small French cemetery near the centre of the forest road, where evidently a company of French soldiers had been entirely wiped out.

Banbury Advertiser, 13 October 1921
Image: © British Library (newspaper archive)
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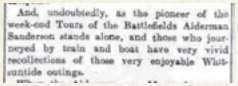
Tourists visiting Paris, Brussels or the Belgian coast could include an excursion to the battlefields as a part of their holidays, which probably meant they approached the experience as a thrill-seeking opportunity. In 1922 *Country Life* carried an advert for 'Ostend: the Queen of Seaside Resorts' that listed the wonders of the resort before concluding: 'Go to Ostend for Happiness, for Gaiety, for Health, where all the pleasures of peace are to be found and where may be seen near by the ravages of War and the Battle Sites of some of the greatest and most glorious engagements in British military history'. Fun, larks, and a few battlefields thrown in seems to be the message.

A similar spirit can be detected in the *Morpeth Herald*'s coverage of the town's annual battlefields visit. Instigated in 1928 by the mayor and other influential members of the town's elite, it rapidly became an excuse for a jolly adventure. Providing information on the plans for the 1938 tour, the newspaper stated that 'undoubtedly, as the pioneer of the week-end Tours of the Battlefields, Alderman Sanderson stands alone, and those who journeyed by train and boat have very vivid recollections of those very enjoyable Whitsuntide outings.'


And, undoubtedly, as the pioneer of the week-end Tours of the Battlefields Alderman Sanderson stands alone, and those who journeyed by train and boat have very vivid recollections of those very enjoyable Whitsuntide outings.

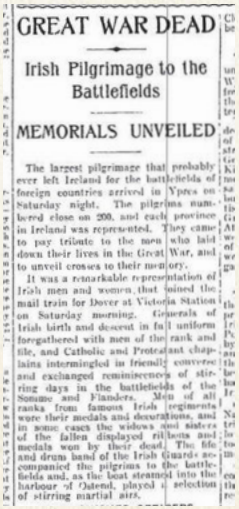
Morpeth Herald, 7 January 1938. Image: © British Library (newspaper archive) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk All rights reserved.

For military units, such as the cadet companies attached to Territorial units, visits to the battlefields were partly a fun adventure for adolescent boys, partly educational, and were usually associated with other goodwill gestures such as exchanges with French equivalents. Here the reason for visiting the battlefields was focused on a very different approach and outcome. Veterans groups were also regular visitors and, unlike the bereaved, they could be much more boisterous. Driven by a completely different set of emotions, and determined to respect their dead comrades by remembering them as the great pals they once were, veterans saw no contradiction in combining moments of solemnity with levity, fun, and, of course, drinking. The *Berwick Advertiser* described the departure of a contingent of former 7th Northumberland Fusiliers for the battlefields in light-hearted terms. 'The party, all of whom have been saving up for several months for the occasion, left Hull in the best of spirits, all looking forward eagerly to an interesting and enjoyable visit to Belgium'.

Visits often reflected a sense of local identity and pride in the wartime achievements of that community. The British League of Help, a charity established to assist the recovery of the devastated regions of France through adoption by British communities, gave many towns the opportunity of creating a living memorial at a place where its men had fought and died. Bexhill-on-Sea adopted Bayencourt on the Somme, and raised enough money for a new water tower to be installed in the village. The formal unveiling ceremony of this new civic amenity took place in June 1924 witnessed by an enthusiastic delegation from Bexhill. Local dignitaries expressed their deep gratitude, which must have caused the Mayor of Bexhill to swell with pride, for he told the *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* that the town had done a 'real sound, pukka, job'.

Arguably, it was in Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State where the cultural and political facets of identity were most keenly expressed during battlefield visits. Deeply aware of the need to stress its credentials as a new and distinctive component united with the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's political elite erected the Ulster Tower at Thiepval on the Somme with incredible rapidity, completing the project in 1921. For Nina Stephenson-Browne of Portstewart, exploring the Thiepval battlefields seemingly as a lone pilgrim, in September 1923, the feeling of communion with her home was very strong. Recounting the scene in an article for her local newspaper, she noted that: 'It required no great stretch of imagination to picture how this scene looked on that first of July day when the Ulster Division stormed up to where I stood with their triumphant shout, "No surrender!".

By contrast, the 1926 pilgrimage to unveil the 16th (Irish) Division crosses at Guillemont on the Somme and Wytschaete near Ypres were consciously devised and reported as moments when the two Irelands could find a common meeting point.


GREAT WAR DEAD

Irish Pilgrimage to the Battlefields

MEMORIALS UNVEILED

The largest pilgrimage that probably ever left Ireland for the battlefields of foreign countries arrived in Ypres on Saturday night. The pilgrims numbered close on 200, and each province in Ireland was represented. They came to pay tribute to the men who laid down their lives in the Great War, and to unveil crosses to their memory.

It was a remarkable representation of Irish men and women that joined the mail train for Dover at Victoria Station on Saturday morning. Generals of Irish birth and descent in full uniform foregathered with men of the rank and file, and Catholic and Protestant chaplains intermingled in friendly converse and exchanged reminiscences of stirring days in the battlefields of the Somme and Flanders. Men of all ranks from famous Irish regiments wore their medals and decorations, and in some cases the widows and sisters of the fallen displayed ribbons and medals won by their dead. The fife and drum band of the Irish Guards accompanied the pilgrims to the battlefields and, as the boat steamed into the harbour of Ostend, played a selection of stirring martial airs.

Dublin Evening Herald, 23 August 1926. Source: Irish Newspaper Archives www.irishnewsarchive.com

IRISH PILGRIMS IN FLANDERS YESTERDAY

AT HISTORIC YPRES—General Sir Bryan Mahon placing a wreath on the Munster Fusiliers' Memorial at Ypres yesterday. The two pictures published today, were conveyed to London by air, and reached our offices this morning.—(Central Press.

Dublin Evening Herald, 23 August 1926. Source: Irish Newspaper Archives www.irishnewsarchive.com

The Dublin *Evening Herald* underlined this element strongly in its coverage: 'The largest pilgrimage that probably ever left Ireland for the battlefields of foreign countries arrived in Ypres on Saturday night. The pilgrims numbered close on 200, and each province in Ireland was represented.' The piece went on to make another explicit reminder that harmony was the leitmotif of the visit: 'Catholic and Protestant chaplains intermingled in friendly converse (sic) and exchanged reminiscences of stirring days in the battlefields of France and Flanders. Men of all ranks from famous Irish regiments wore their medals and decorations, and in some cases the widows and sisters of the fallen displayed ribbons and medals won by their dead.' Sites in Belgium and France could therefore be celebrated as common ground. War remembrance was obviously made much easier when taken away from the island of Ireland altogether.

How was the landscape interpreted and experienced by visitors?

Huge changes overtook the battlefields very quickly as the work of both nature and man began to restore the landscape. Reporting on the visit of a British Red Cross delegate to the battlefields of France and Belgium in November 1919, the *Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer* told its readers of the 'indescribable mass of abandoned war material [sic], and incomprehensible chaos'. But by 1930, when the *Belfast News-Letter* published the experiences of a returning veteran, the situation was transformed.

'To go back now, eleven years after, and revisit the battlefields is only to be disillusioned. Many ex-soldiers have made the pilgrimage, but a greater number have not. To those who haven't I would say – Keep your memories.' For this particular veteran the transformation was almost traumatically disturbing. At Armentières 'everything was changed – the buildings and the people' so much so that he found himself 'wandering disconsolate' around the town. For others, nature's healing of the wounds was therapeutic and cathartic. In August 1922, the *Hull Daily Mail* published the reflections of a veteran who had recently returned from a cycling tour of the battlefields. The ground over which the Third Battle of Ypres was fought is described as 'rich with golden crops and is unbroken save for a few scars', while on the Somme he found 'a much restored and cultivated land'.

PILGRIMAGE TO

LAND OF MANY MEMORIES

Where the Men of Ulster Fought and Suffered.

"EVERYTHING CHANGED."

By J. B. M.

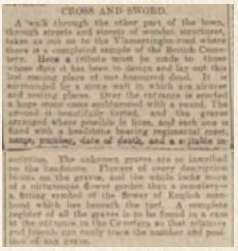
The following article is from the pen of an officer who served from 1914 to 1919 and took part, as a private in the Somme Battle which commenced on 1st July, 1916. He relates his impressions on revisiting the battlefields.

Eleven years have fled since the "Cease Fire" sounded and the Great War ended, but during the years that followed there remained in the minds of those who served memories of those never-to-be-forgotten days. To the ex-soldier those epic days seem as yesterday, and he thinks of the Somme, Ypres, Messines, Passchendaele, and all those "billet" villages and towns as they were in '15, '16, '17, and '18. To go back now, eleven years after, and revisit the battlefields is only to be disillusioned. Many ex-soldiers have made the pilgrimage, but a greater number have not. To those who haven't I would say—Keep your memories.

For years I resisted the call of the battlefields, that yearning to get back to those "unhappy far off things and battles long ago," then one May morn the "pull" became irresistable, and packing a rucksack I set sail in the s.s. Grania from Eden Quay, Dublin, and landed at Dunkirk on the first stage of my pilgrimage. From Dunkirk I motored to Armentiers along treeless roads once lined with poplars and arrived in Half-Past Eleven Square.

Everything was changed—the buildings and the people. The Town Hall with its lofty clock spire had disappeared. So, too, had the quaint cafes and shops with their higgledy-piggledy architecture, their picturesque green, white and yellow fronts. In their place stood new shops and offices, blue slated with glaring brick walls, stereotyped and symmetrical—ugly in the extreme. In the centre of the Grand Place or Square, a large and very ornate war memorial stood, while the Pave, over which once echoed the swish-swish of marching feet and the rumble of transport, was replaced by gravel.

Belfast News-Letter, 4 August 1930. Source: Irish Newspaper Archives www.irishnewsarchive.com



CROSS AND SWORD.

A walk through the other part of the town, through streets and streets of wooden structures, takes us once more to the Cemeteries, and where there is a completed example of the British Cemetery. Here a tribute must be made to those whose dust it has been to design and lay out this last resting place of our honoured dead. It is surrounded by a stone wall in which are shrines and resting places. Over the entrance is erected a huge stone cross emblazoned with a sword. The ground is beautifully tended, and the graves artistically set out, where possible in lines, and each one is faced with a headstone bearing regimental crest, name, number, date of death, and a suitable inscription. The unknown graves are so inscribed on the headstone. Flowers of all descriptions flourish on the graves, and the whole looks more like a picturesque flower garden than a cemetery—a fitting setting to the flower of England's manhood which lies beneath the turf. A complete register of all the graves is to be found in a case in the entrance to the Cemetery, so that relatives and friends can easily trace the number and position of any grave.

Hull Daily Mail, 25 August 1922. Source: Mirrorpix / Hull Daily Mail

The cemeteries and memorials were, of course, the focal point of the landscape for visitors from Britain and Ireland. Seeing the maturing work of the Imperial War Graves Commission usually evoked a deep sense of gratitude, reverence and peace. The journalist and writer, Henry Benson, produced a widely-syndicated series of articles about his visits to the Western Front, and reassured those who could not make the trip of the serenity and perfection of the cemeteries. Each grave had been 'treated with consummate care and forethought.

In front of every plot, shrubs and seasonal flowers… waft fragrantly in the breeze'. A veteran returning to the battlefields in 1926 for the first time since 1919 wrote to the *Berwickshire News and Advertiser* stating that his whole party was 'gratified to see the care taken. There are regular rows of headstones, all the same size and shape, each one with inscription, either name and regiment, some regiment only, and others unknown and round the cemeteries beautiful flowers are set.'

Visitors also interacted with the people they met living and working across the former Western Front. Sometimes that could lead to surprises. In 1919, the *Driffield Times* republished a piece that originally appeared in the *Daily Mail*, which noted the flourishing souvenir trade run by men of the Chinese Labour Corps working on battlefield clearance operations. For veterans returning to the battlefields the experience could mean reverting to old habits whilst among the local people. A Diss veteran told readers of his local paper that at the many estaminets and cafes 'one may still obtain from Madam a café or "deux oeufs and chips".' He also noted the extreme care with which the local farmers were digging over their land due to the large amounts of unexploded ammunition in the ground.

FARMING ABOVE MINES.

On the Messines Ridge the craters of the 19 mines are still as the war left them, the majority being filled with water. Four more mines were constructed and charged, but as they were outside the zone of operations on June 7th, 1917, they were never used. They are there to this day, but have probably long ceased to be effective, although the Belgians farming the land overhead regard them with anything but composure. Taking the Menin Road (what a horrible name this still sounds), a familiar spot is soon reached in Hellfire Corner. Trains are again crossing the road at this point. Farther on lies the Hedge Crater cemetery, beautifully laid out with a circle of stone, apparently marking the site of the old crater. Opposite this cemetery I discovered a piece of "virgin" land. The natives were beginning the task of digging this over for metal. This work was being done very carefully, for numbers of peasants are still being killed by live shells, bombs, etc. The metal found is stacked in heaps on the roadside. There is everything one can think of, from a shrapnel bullet to a 12-inch "dud," tin hats, wirecutters, machine guns and rifles, all yellow with rust and rust. It is amazing to see the hundreds of tons of this metal which, every week, go through Ypres on the way to the furnaces. Sanctuary Wood is becoming more suited to its name. Along the Zonnebeke Road, Potijze is again in being, while on the left is St. Jean, now looking very spruce with its new church. Westhoek can be seen just beyond. The old familiar smell of dust and the peculiarly Ypres smell still hangs over these fields and roads. Nothing is so powerful as the sense of smell for plunging one back ten years.

Thetford and Watton Times and *People's Weekly Journal*, 25 August 1928. Image: © British Library (newspaper archive) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk All rights reserved.

In the summer of 1926 Raymond Ridgeway reflected on the nature of the Somme battlefields in a series of articles carried in Yorkshire newspapers. He noted the large number of labourers drawn to Albert, the nodal point of the Somme battlefields, through the abundance of reconstruction work, and also the scale of the British colony associated with the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission and battlefield tourism. Further, he realised that this influx was now creating a Franco-British community. 'One encounters numerous ex-servicemen, who, having married French girls, have settled down to civilian occupation.'

The peaks and troughs of battlefield visiting

Judging by the articles carried in British and Irish regional newspapers, battlefield visiting was at its height in the period 1920-1924, there was then a slight lull, followed by another peak in 1928, largely associated with the huge British Legion pilgrimage. Visiting certainly tailed off in the early thirties, but it never died out completely, and seemed to undergo something of a revival in the second half of the thirties. It is possible that as the international situation worsened people actively sought some kind of enhanced understanding of the nature of the Great War. Indeed, such was the interest that some groups were almost caught out in August and September 1939. On 2 September 1939, the *Aberdeen People's Journal* carried the story of a local woman who had at last visited her husband's grave near Ypres. Although the party to which she belonged had no difficulty completing its itinerary, 'in the last stages of the tour they saw great signs of military preparedness'. Within a few days a new British Expeditionary Force had arrived in France, and, as the papers tell us, some of these men promptly made battlefield tours of their own. Battlefield visiting was, indeed, deeply embedded in British culture during the 1920s and 1930s.

WAITED 22 YEARS

Woodside Woman Sees Husband's Grave

At Ypres

Special to "People's Journal."

I WAITED 22 years for it!" Mrs Petrie, 542 Great Northern Road, Aberdeen, who spoke those words, had just returned from a visit to the grave of her husband, Robert Petrie, a young soldier of the Black Watch, who was killed at Ypres in 1917.

"All those years I had thought of it," said Mrs Petrie. "Sometimes I felt I couldn't go to the Belgian war cemetery and at others I had a great desire to see the grave. The other day my great chance came along, and I seized it. I don't regret I went."

Mrs Petrie revealed that they had been married only a few days before the Great War broke out. Her husband, employed in the city as a painter, had always wanted to join the Black Watch, and after his enlistment he was successful in getting into that regiment.

Body Found.

In July 1917 he was reported missing, and it was not until two months later that his body was found near Ypres. At first it was buried in the little cemetery of St Julien, but later it was transferred to St Jean. Up to the time of her visit she had not even seen a photo of her husband's grave.

The pilgrimage to the battlefields of Belgium and France, in which Mrs Petrie and several other Aberdeen people took part, was organised by the Black Watch Association and dedicated to the memory of over 9000 officers and men of the regiment who gave their lives in the war. It also commemorated the bi-centenary of the formation of the Black Watch.

First the party went to the military cemetery at Le Touret, where a wreath was laid. At the Arras War Memorial they arranged a ceremony, during which General Victor Fortune placed a wreath on behalf of the association.

By Torchlight.

The "pilgrims" then marched to the Town Hall and were received by the Mayor, afterwards visiting Le Cateau and Cambrai. In the evening they were guests of the 3rd Regiment of Engineers.

On through Douai, Orchies, Tournai, Fontenoy, Leuze, Ath, Enghien, and Waterloo to a field on the Charleroi-Brussels road. There the Black Watch met two

(Continued at foot of next column.)

Aberdeen People's Journal, 2 September 1939. Image: © British Library (newspaper archive) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk All rights reserved.

Notes

Quotations were taken from the following newspapers:

Aberdeen People's Journal, 2 September 1939
Aberdeen Press and Journal, 1 July 1924
Banbury Advertiser, 13 October 1921
Belfast News-Letter, 22 April 1924; 4 August 1930
Berwick Advertiser, 14 July 1927
Berwickshire News and Advertiser, 21 November 1922; 19 August 1926
Bexhill-on-Sea Observer, 7 June 1924
Burnley News, 22 May 1920
Country Life, 22 July 1922
Dover Express, 10 August 1928
Driffield Times, 6 September 1919
Dundee Courier, 16 February 1920
Evening Herald (Dublin), 23 August 1926
Falkirk Herald, 11 August 1928
Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer, 29 November 1919
Hull Daily Mail, 25 August 1922
Kirkintilloch Gazette, 29 July 1927
Lancashire Daily Post, 15 July 1920
Leeds Mercury, 29 June 1926
Morpeth Advertiser, 7 January 1938
Northern Constitution, 3 November 1923
Nottingham Evening Post, 4 November 1920
Thetford and Watton Times, 25 August 1928
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 27 May 1920

Image: George Godden

The project: team members and methods

Funded by Gateways to the First World War through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), *Visiting and Revisiting the Battlefields*, is a crowd-sourcing project devised by Professor Mark Connelly. The method for exploring the phenomenon of battlefield visiting was to search for stories in two digital collections: the British Newspaper Archive and Irish Newspaper Archives. Nineteen people volunteered to take part in the project, and the first step was a group session allowing the team to meet each other, hear more details about the aims and objectives of the project, and familiarise themselves with the research methods and processes. The volunteers were given the option of working at home through a subscription to the British Newspaper Archive or joining Mark Connelly for a research week at the British Library where they accessed digitised newspapers through the terminals in the Newsroom. Connelly devised a reporting sheet divided into chronological sections with a series of key-word themes for investigation. One volunteer was based in Australia and undertook to follow the project outline through the National Library of Australia digitised newspaper collection, Trove. The results of the research were discussed at a group meeting in which Mark Connelly undertook to write a text drawing together the conclusions creating two booklets, one exploring the position in the British Isles, and the other in Australia.

The research team consisted of:

Peter Alhadeff, Mark Allen, Hazel Basford, James and Susan Brazier, Mark Connelly, Steve Dale, Charles Davis (Australia), Malcolm Doolin, Valerie Ellis, Tim Godden, Simon Gregor, Jan and Richard Johnson, Andrew Johnston, Gill and Roger Joye, Pat O'Brien, Stephen Miles, Jon Palmer, Julie Seales, Jonathan Vernon.

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Extracts: *Aberdeen People's Journal*, 2 September 1939; *Banbury Advertiser*, 13 October 1921; *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 August 1922 (Mirrorpix / Hull Daily Mail); *Lancashire Daily Post*, 15 July 1920; *Morpeth Advertiser*, 7 January 1938; *Thetford and Watton Times*, 25 August 1928.

Irish Newspaper Archives (www.irishnewsarchive.com)

Extracts: *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 August 1930; *Evening Herald* (Dublin), 23 August 1926.

Visitors at the Queen Victoria Rifles memorial, Hill 60. This memorial was destroyed in the fighting in 1940 and replaced with a monument of a different design after the Second World War.

Image: Philip Woets