

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: WWI Battlefields Visit – Friday 17th to Sunday 19th July 2026

The History Department are exploring the viability of running a World War One battlefields trip from **Friday 17th to Sunday 19th July 2026**. The trip will be made available for the following year groups:

- Year 8** – this year group will be in Year 9 at the time of the visit and will have already studied WWI in February 2025.
- Year 9** – only those students who will be studying GCSE History from September 2025.
- Year 10** - open to all students who take GCSE History but also are interested in History.

The trip will only be able to run if we have a minimum of 30 students. The maximum cost of the trip will be **£613** per student. This cost will reduce to **£535** per student if we take 40 students or **£492** per student if we take 50 students on the trip. A deposit ranging from £50 to £80 (depending on final number of students) would be payable via Parent Pay by **Friday 25th April**. There will then be an option to pay twelve monthly instalments of between £37 and £46 with the final payment being paid on **Friday 8th April 2026**.

As a school we are currently applying for funding to see if we can reduce the cost of the trip. If we are successful, we will reduce the cost of the trip accordingly. We can also offer financial support for anyone in receipt of Pupil Premium.

I appreciate that this is an expensive trip and to help you make an informed decision I have enclosed detailed information in relation to what is included in the price of the trip and a sample three-day itinerary. If you would like further information about the company we will be using please visit their website: <https://www.zeitgeisttours.com/#>

If you would like your child to have the opportunity to take part in this visit, could you please complete an expression of interest by using the following link to complete the form: <https://forms.office.com/e/bdd8gUGV7V>. **The expression of interest will go live on Friday 21st March at 6pm and close on Friday 28th March at 5pm**. If more than 30 students express an interest, I will proceed by sending out formal letters so that you can book a place on the visit.

Kind Regards
Bethany Shelton
Head of History

What is included in the price?

- Executive coach – 2 guides per coach
- Return Channel crossing including breakfast on the way to Calais and evening meal on return.
- 2 nights full board accommodation at HOTEL PAX, DIKSMUIDE. **Accommodation features its own restaurant, and comfortable rooms are equipped with a flat screen TV, free Wi-Fi, and a private bathroom with toilet and a bath or shower.**
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided on all days.
- 3-day Flanders & Somme itinerary: An engaging itinerary allowing for a maximum of immersion and emotional learning. A wealth of activities woven into a tapestry of story and historical narrative to truly bring history alive.
- Knowledgeable historians to bring the past to life – two of our engaging team as your guides, including extensive British Army kit. Students get the benefit of having their very own authentically dressed British officer of the Great War to accompany them and answer all of their questions about what it was like to be a soldier in the trenches at the time. A wealth of period British uniform and equipment is available for handling and trying out.
- Hooge Crater Museum, including a freshly prepared tasty lunch, entry to the fantastic museum and the Flanders version of our Zeitgeist Trench Experience, where the students get the opportunity to try on soldiers' uniform, sample and compare the rations of a British and a German soldier, test out gas masks and smell the different types of gas, and fire our 1917-made Great War Mauser G98 rifle! (blanks, of course!)
- Yser Tower, Diksmuide, which emphasises the message of peace. From the panorama hall on the roof terrace, 273 feet above the 'Flanders Fields', you have a unique view over the entire area from Nieuwpoort by the coast to Ypres and Ploegsteert. All WW1 sites are clearly signposted to enable students to gain a better understanding of the movement of war in Flanders.
- Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate during which the students will lay a biodegradable wreath (supplied by Zeitgeist) as part of the ceremony.
- A booked visit to Leonidas chocolate shop in Ypres to buy Belgian chocolates.
- Zeitgeist Tours First World War Tour Pal Student Edition for every student: a 105-page book written by our team of teachers, authors, historians and archaeologists and packed with colourful and informative content covering many aspects of the Great War. This includes 10 specially commissioned cartoon pages drawn by top comic book and aviation artist Keith Burns.

What will my child do during the visit?

Please find below a sample itinerary. The times and exact activities are subject to change.

Friday 17th July (DAY 1: INTO FLANDERS FIELDS)

01.00 Depart SCHOOL

05.40 Arrive DOVER

07.40 Depart DOVER via DFDS ferry – breakfast on board

10.10 Arrive in CALAIS

Sites visited will include:

HOOGE CRATER MUSEUM AND TRENCH EXPERIENCE (including lunch)

Situated right on the front lines of 1914-17, HOOGE CRATER MUSEUM offers a comfortable café venue for lunch but also an opportunity to explore the reality of trench warfare in their superb reconstruction of a trench, including handling artefacts, uniform and equipment and experiencing a gas attack; while in the trench, a small number of students will have the chance to carry out a blank firing activity using an original Great War rifle (numbers limited due to livestock nearby). There's a comprehensive MUSEUM on site too, full to the rafters with artefacts and displays, based around the experience, uniform, equipment and weapons of the ordinary soldier and themes such as battlefield medicine.

TYNE COT MILITARY CEMETERY (CWGC)

The CWGC cemetery at TYNE COT is the largest British & Commonwealth military cemetery in the world, the resting place of over 11,900 men of Britain and her former Empire.

LANGEMARK GERMAN CEMETERY

Visiting the German war cemetery will enable students to consider the surprisingly similar motivations of German and British men to fight, to reflect upon different methods of memorialising the war and commemorating the fallen, and to explore some of the myths surrounding the fighting in the area.

17.30 Check into the **HOTEL PAX HOSTEL** in **DIKSMUIDE**

18.30 EVENING MEAL in **HOSTEL CAFETERIA**

19.30 FREE TIME

Saturday 18th July (DAY 2: THE SOMME BATTLEFIELD)

07.00 Breakfast

08.00 Depart HOSTEL

Sites visited will include:

SOMME - BEAUMONT HAMEL, SUNKEN LANE, HAWTHORN RIDGE, HAWTHORN MINE CRATER

There are many sunken lanes on the Somme, but this is the most famous. Located in No Man's Land, the British annexed it just prior to 1st July and 252nd Tunnelling Company Royal Engineers constructed a tunnel linking it with the old British front line. In the early hours of 1st July 1916 the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers came up into the sunken lane to use it as a jumping off position for the attack on Beaumont Hamel.

AVRIL'S TEA ROOMS, AUCHONVILLERS

Lunch break

NEWFOUNDLAND PARK, BEAUMONT HAMEL

The Newfoundland Park commemorates the men of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment who fought here on 1st July 1916 when they lost 26 officers and 658 men in the attack on Beaumont-Hamel.

THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

18.30 Arrive in **YPRES** – short sightseeing walk.

19.00 LEONIDAS CHOCOLATE SHOP

19.30 Arrive at **MENIN GATE** with **LAST POST CEREMONY**

21.00 Arrive back at **HOSTEL**

Sunday 19th July – DAY 3

07.00 Breakfast

08.30 Check out of HOSTEL

Sites visited may include:

HOLDING THE RIDGE, MESSINES AND WIJTSCHATE, BAYERNWALD TRENCH SYSTEM

In the morning we will explore the strategical key position of the war in western Flanders: the ridge of Messines.

PLOEGSTEERT MEMORIAL TO THE MISSING AND HYDE PARK CORNER CEMETERY.

What happened here? The fascinating and moving story of a British Sergeant and a German officer. Jews in the German Army.

YSER TOWER MUSEUM, DIKSMUIDE

The museum, consisting of 22 floors, each focusing on a different First World War theme, is housed in an 84 metre high tower which stands as a monument to the Flemish fallen of the Great War. It is also known as the 'Peace Tower' and the four sides of the base of the tower read "Never war again" in the three languages of Belgium, as well as in English.

14:30 Board the coach and depart for CALAIS

16:00 Arrive at CALAIS

18:05 Depart CALAIS via DFDS ferry – dinner on board

18:35 Arrive at DOVER

23.30 Return to SCHOOL