



## Return to the Battlefields

### A Short Guide



by

**Mike Royden**



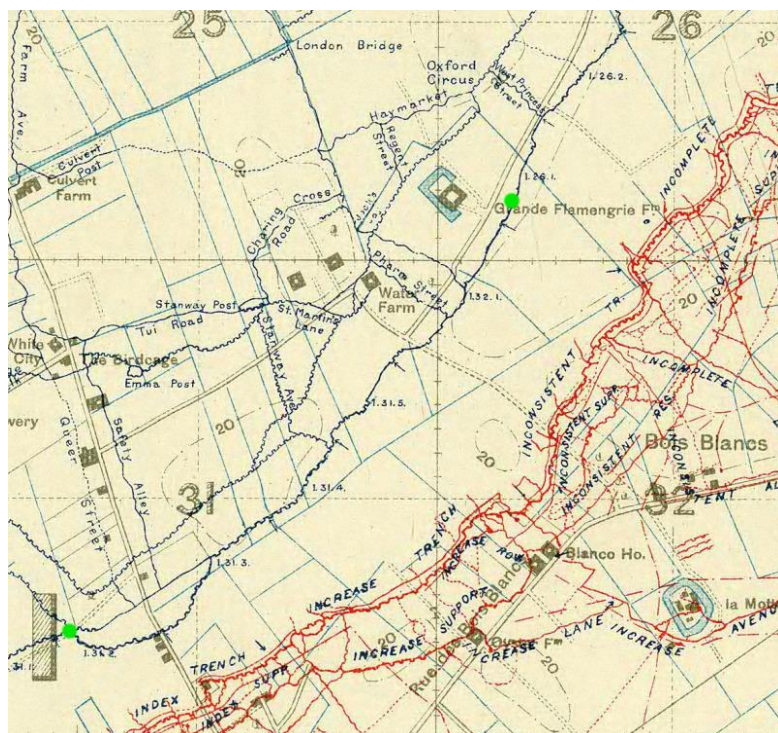
Visiting the battlefields actually began before the war came to an end, with bereaved relatives and the curious being escorted around areas well behind the lines which previously had been part of the action before the Front Line advanced forward. In peace time, pilgrimages soon increased, especially once the new Imperial War Commission cemeteries had been laid out and areas made safe. Today, with the growth in interest in family tree research, local history, the aid of the internet and the fact that those who were directly involved were diminishing, the visits to the battlefields are more popular than ever.

## Planning your visit

If you are to maximise your visit, it is essential that you are well prepared. What will be the focus to your visit, or are you intending to experience a general tour? Consider the following paths of research; Family History / Local History / War Memorial research / Old Pals Regiment / Regimental History / troop movements. Are you intent on tracing the grave or memorial of an ancestor, or trying to trace their movements while serving? Depending on the depth of your research it is advisable to study maps of the area and decide what can be compressed into each day.



For the first-time visitor, there are numerous sites such as the Thiepval Memorial, Vimy Ridge, Beaumont Hamel, plus attending the Menin Gate evening service, which are essential to include on your tour. The purchase of a detailed guide book is crucial to help planning, opening times, accessibility, brief site histories and other vital information. Several recommended volumes can be found below.



## What to Take

In addition to the usual holiday essentials, your kit could include, general maps, WW1 trench maps, CWGC guide to cemeteries and memorials, Battlefield guidebooks, notebooks, camera with spare cards, laptop, research notes on what you have discovered so far, plus a detailed plan of your itinerary and what you hope to visit or discover from particular sites. Outdoor sites such as cemeteries and trench locations can usually be visited well into the evening should you be travelling into the summer months, which could leave the daytime to see places such as exhibitions and museums with specific opening hours.

### **Tour operators**

For many first-time visitors who don't know their way around, many not have their own transport, or just wish to opt for guided tours, this may be for you. There are numerous UK-based specialist tour operators with years of experience with knowledgeable guides offering such tours. A simple internet search will produce plenty of examples, and there are numerous adverts carried in the back pages of the variety of family history magazines currently on sale. Local branches of societies such as the WFA also organise trips for members.

#### **Poppy Travel    [www.poppytravel.org.uk](http://www.poppytravel.org.uk) (through the British Legion) 01622 716729**

Battlefield Tours focus on how ordinary men met extraordinary challenges in the face of fear, fatigue, bad weather and a determined enemy. They are more concerned with people than equipment and strategy. There is an emphasis on storytelling rather than lecturing, their object being to bring the past to life on the very ground where dramatic and moving events took place.

They welcome veterans of past conflicts and relatives – particularly those researching their family history. Their expert battlefield guides all have operational service experience and can help you fill in the gaps in your family history. Where time and the itinerary permit, they are happy to include some special grave or memorial visits. Each tour is accompanied by a Support Party, consisting of a senior member of the Legion, an experienced guide/tour manager, a Standard Bearer and a medic, to assist with the Acts of Remembrance.



#### **Battlefield Tours    [www.battlefieldtours.co.uk](http://www.battlefieldtours.co.uk)    0121 430 5348**

This is the operating name for the War Research Society which specialises in taking pilgrims, veterans, widows and children to visit the battlefields, memorials and last resting places of the fallen, combined with guided historical tours of the areas of the First and Second World Wars in Northern France, Belgium, and Italy. The routes are carefully planned so that you see as much as possible; the hotels are all of excellent standard, usually family run with private bathroom, toilet, television and telephone in all rooms, buffet breakfast and 3 course evening meals. Packed lunches are available on some of the days. Visits to all places are done in a relaxed way with ample time to see what you wish and you will not be rushed around. Entertainment is usually provided in the hotel in the evening in which you can participate if you so wish.

#### **Holts Battlefield Tours    [www.holts.co.uk](http://www.holts.co.uk)    01293 865 000**

A well-established operator, and one of the best known, specialising in history & battlefield tours worldwide with an impressive list of expert guides.

#### **Battlefield Tours by Leger Holidays    [www.visitbattlefields.co.uk](http://www.visitbattlefields.co.uk)    0844 504 6251**

A company that has been running tours since 1983 and provides a broad choice of tours. Paul Reed, noted battlefields expert and advisor on numerous TV documentaries, is their head guide.



#### **Anglia Battlefield Tours    [www.angliatours.co.uk](http://www.angliatours.co.uk)    01245 231991**

Formed in 1997 as a specialist operator for school groups and are now the largest independent history based schools tour operator in the United Kingdom. Each tour is led by highly experienced history and battlefield guides, designed to meet the specific needs of each customer and linked directly to examining board specifications.

#### **Battle Fields    [www.battlefields.be](http://www.battlefields.be)**

A tour with a difference where this Belgian company operates aerial battle site tours by helicopter.



## Trench Map Tours. [www.trenchmaptours.com](http://www.trenchmaptours.com)

Expert Battlefield guide, Iain McHenry, operates many different types of tour to the battlefields, ranging from those that give an introduction to the Western Front to more bespoke tours that either follow a theme or have a genealogical touch to them. He has many different itineraries that suit varying customer needs and cover not just the British area of the Western Front but also those areas fought over by the French.

## Maps

IGN are the French equivalent of Ordnance Survey. Their Blue Series 1:25,000 maps are superbly detailed and essential for anyone wanting to explore the French countryside and are regarded as the best French walking maps. Four sheets cover the main 1916 Battlefield. They can be ordered online from the IGN web site ([www.ign.fr](http://www.ign.fr)), or when visiting sites such as the Historial in Peronne and Thiepval Visitors Centre. They can also be obtained before travelling from [www.themapcentre.com](http://www.themapcentre.com). There is also a 1/100,000 series for the road user. Michelin also produce road maps which can be purchased online or any tourist sites and petrol stations once in France or Belgium.

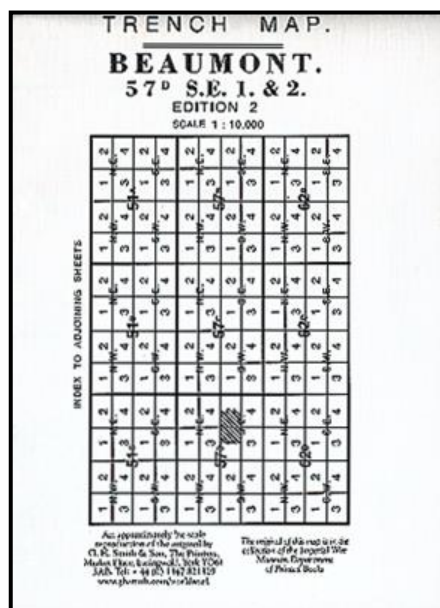
## Western Front Map for WWI

[www.footstepmaps.com.au/westernfront.htm](http://www.footstepmaps.com.au/westernfront.htm)

A *Guide to the Western Front* is both an historical and tour guide map designed for those wishing to visit some of the World War One battlefields in France and Belgium and know more about the causes, history and aftermath of the War. On the historical side is shown the movement of the Front between 1914 and 1918, detailed enlargements of the main battlefields of Ypres, the Somme, Verdun, Cambrai and Lys, together with a concise history of the war and numerous photographs from that time. The tourist guide on the reverse provides enlarged road maps of the main battlefields with numbered roads and locations of memorials and the main military cemeteries. A small scale map is also provided indicating the various battlefield areas in relation to the main capital cities in North Western Europe. There is additional information and about 80 colour photographs of the memorials, cemeteries and sites of interest.



## Trench Maps



## Reproduction Trench Map Sheets

### WWI Trench maps for Belgium & France

[www.ghsmithbookshop.com](http://www.ghsmithbookshop.com)

G.H. Smith & Son have produced a series of British Army trench maps from the First World War, reproduced at approximately 7/10th of the original size (1:10,000/1:20,000.). The maps show both the British and the enemy trenches. Several of the maps also indicate supply and ammunition dumps, machine gun and trench mortar emplacements, observation posts, etc. They can be obtained online from their website and also at numerous museum shops throughout the Western Front.

## Digital Maps

### The National Archives British Trench Map Atlas

[www.britishtrenchmaps.com](http://www.britishtrenchmaps.com)

A DVD with over 700 Large scale 1:10,000 trench maps compiled from the collection held at The National Archives Covers the whole length of

the British sector of the Western Front is available from [www.britishtrenchmaps.com](http://www.britishtrenchmaps.com) searchable index to trench names, hyperlinked to maps, significant places of interest also hyperlinked Zoom in for detailed analysis All maps fully printable

### **Linesman [www.greatwardigital.com](http://www.greatwardigital.com)**

LinesMan by Great War Digital provides easy access to a comprehensive Western Front trench map archive which can be used on a PC or laptop with the inclusive Memory-Map software. These maps now reside in our national institutions, such as the National Archives, the Imperial War Museum, and the Royal Geographical Society, and in smaller numbers in private collections throughout the world. Great War Digital have searched the archives of these institutions, and visited numerous private collections over five years, to scan a selection of over 2,000 maps in 1:10,000, 1:20,000 & 1:40,000 scale. The system is also compatible with Windows Mobile, GPS devices (the Adventurer), iPhones and iPads. Using Global Positioning System (GPS) this gives the WW1 explorer a way of taking trench maps to the Western Front battlefields on a suitable hand held GPS device. An on-screen marker will show the users real-time position on the trench map being studied. Navigation through comparable modern maps and aerial photographs can also be carried out once bolt on software is installed (also available from the same company). In the years since the conflict most of the trenches have disappeared from view and are completely unrecognisable, having been filled in or reclaimed by nature, which is where this system can help with accurate navigation around the former battlefield.



## **BELGIUM – YPRES (IEPER) SALIENT AREA**

### **Recommended Guidebooks**

**Holt, Tonie & Valmai, *Holt's Guide to the Ypres Salient*** (Pen & Sword Books)

[The Holts have many more guides available, see [www.guide-books.co.uk](http://www.guide-books.co.uk)]

This is particularly useful if you want to follow recommended tours, with timed itineraries, but it serves equally well as a specialised general guide. Included is a fold out map of the Ypres battlefield. Highlighted routes have a description of each stopping place and often a tale of action related to it. Listings are also given of memorials both private and official; sites of memorable conflict; and resting places of personalities of note.

**Reed, Paul, *Walking the Salient: Ypres*** (Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

Paul Reed is a leading military historian and tour guide, and is the author of several battlefield books, while also working as an historical consultant and contributor for Television, on programmes such as *Timewatch*, *Who Do You Think You Are* and *Meet The Ancestors*. His walking guides are a remarkable insight and clearly reflect his depth of knowledge about the battles and the geography of the area.



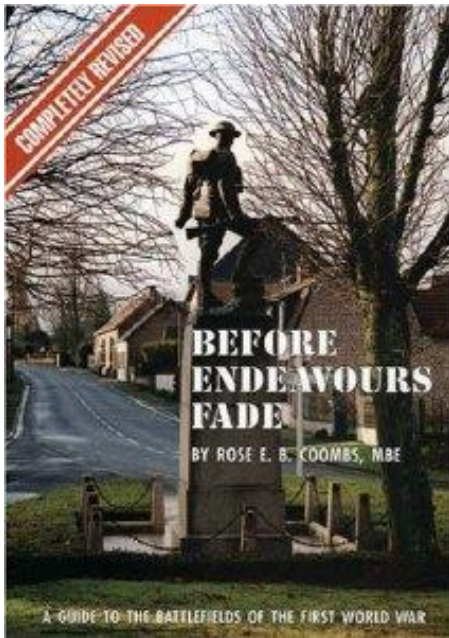
**Cave, Nigel, *Passchendaele*** (Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

Nigel Cave is the editor of the WW1 books in the Battleground Europe series and has authored several guides in his own right. The Series is designed for both the battlefield visitor and the reader at home, and they each give an invaluable description of each site with graphic descriptions of action, often through first-hand accounts, supported by illustrations, diagrams and maps. The British offensive, which became known as Passchendaele, commenced on 31 July, 1917 with the objective of capturing fifteen miles of territory. The attack quickly lost momentum and it was not until November that the line managed to advance seven miles. As winter set in, the British troops were subjected to some of the worst conditions they had ever faced.

During the attack over a quarter of a million men were either killed or injured. This battlefield guide gives details of the attacks whilst guiding the reader through the battlefield as it stands today.

**Cave, Nigel, *Hill 60, Ypres* (Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)**

Some three miles south east of Ypres, the shell-ravaged landscape of Hill 60 on the Salient ridge conceals a labyrinth of tunnels and underground workings. This book offers a guide to the memorials, cemeteries and museums at the site.



**Coombs, Rose E.B. , *Before Endeavours Fade***

From the Belgian coast, across the fields of Flanders, over the valley of the Somme and down the line to the Argonne: all the major battlefields of the First World War - Ypres, Arras, Cambrai, Amiens, St. Quentin, Mons, Le Cateau, Reims, Verdun and St. Mihiel - are criss-crossed in this book over more than thirty different routes, each clearly shown on a Michelin map. The author has combined years of knowledge, travel and research to described every significant feature in detail.

Rose Coombs worked at the Imperial War Museum in London for nearly forty years and produced an indispensable guide for anyone contemplating a tour of the battlefields in Belgium and France, Since her death in 1991, Karel Margry, has travelled every route, checking and revising the text where necessary, as well as re-photographing every memorial. Many new ones are included, while striving to keep true to the flavour of Rose's original work.

**Hughes, Gareth, *Visiting the Somme and Ypres Battlefields Made Easy* (Pen & Sword)**

**A Helpful Guide Book for Groups and Individuals**

Gareth Hughes is Head of History at Pocklington School near York and has led many parties to the Western Front as well as to the battlefields of North America, Russia and Normandy. Intended for those planning and leading school groups and similar parties, it is also ideal for individual and family visitors, and will be invaluable to those visiting the battlefields, sites, museums, memorials and cemeteries of France and Belgium. Rather than list every site Gareth Hughes provides realistic itineraries to the best places in the two major areas of the Somme and Ypres. Even these are flexible to allow party leaders suitable discretion. He provides helpful information for each site such as its context in the War, visitor orientation, the 'spiel' (the essential facts to engage, inform and entertain), suggested activity and relevant photos and maps. It all combines to make every visit of maximum benefit and interest and yet reduce the workload of the party leaders. There are also valuable tips for lunch breaks, free time ideas and other helpful pointers.

## Accommodation

On the Western Front there are two main areas which can be used as a base for your visit; in Belgium, the town of Ypres (now known as Ieper), and in France, the Somme area around Albert. There are numerous places to stay, many dedicated to the Battlefield visitor. Accommodation ranges from hotels, to B & Bs and self-catering gites, plus there are several pleasant camp sites. Increasingly, many establishments are being run by British ex-pats to specifically provide services for the Battlefield visitor and often offer guided tours also.

**Ypres tourist office [www.ieper.be](http://www.ieper.be)**

Ieper Tourist Office, Cloth Hall, Grote Markt 34, B - 8900 Ieper, Belgium

Tel: 057 239 220 email: [Toerisme@ieper.be](mailto:Toerisme@ieper.be)

The visitor centre for Ypres and the Westhoek is located in the western wing of the Cloth Hall. Comprehensive lists of local accommodation can be found here, plus plenty of information about where to visit in Ypres, Flanders Fields and French Flanders over the border. Ypres (Ieper) is one of the best places you can choose for the combination of access, accommodation, breadth of



historical monuments and battlefield places of interest, plus places for respite and refreshment in the evenings.

## HOTELS

### IEPER

#### **HOTEL ARIANE**     [www.ariane.be](http://www.ariane.be)

A four star hotel with spacious en-suite rooms. Beautiful restaurant, bar, sauna and jacuzzi. The hotel foyer contains many WW1 exhibits. A short walk from Ieper town square (Grote Markt) and the Menin Gate. Hotel Ariane, Boezinge Straat, 8900 Ieper. Tel - 0032 (0) 57 21 82 18. Email – [info@ariane.be](mailto:info@ariane.be)

#### **NOVOTEL**     [www.accorhotels.com](http://www.accorhotels.com)

Modern three star hotel 200 meters from the town square. All bedrooms en-suite, bar, sauna and fitness room, underground car park.

Novotel, Sint Jacobsstraat, 8900 Ieper Tel- 0032 (0) 57 42 96 00.

Email – [H3172@accor-hotels.com](mailto:H3172@accor-hotels.com)

#### **ALBION HOTEL**     [www.albionhotel.be](http://www.albionhotel.be)

Privately run family hotel close to the Menin Gate and Cloth Hall. Aimed at those touring the Battlefields with excellent facilities.

Albion Hotel, St. Jacobsstraat 28, 8900 Ieper, Belgium. Tel: 0032 (0)57 200 220.

Email [info@albionhotel.be](mailto:info@albionhotel.be)

## BED AND BREAKFAST

#### **AMBROSIA HOTEL**

[www.shellhole.com](http://www.shellhole.com)

The Ambrosia hotel an excellent B&B just 300 metres from the town square. Formerly known as the ‘Shellhole’, there are 9 double and single bedrooms, all ensuite.

**Ambrosia Hotel**, D’Hondstraat 54-56, 8900, Ieper. Tel 0032 (0) 57 20 87 58.

#### **THE RUM JAR**     [www.therumjar.be](http://www.therumjar.be)

The Rum Jar is located about 350 meters from the town square and is directly opposite the Common Wealth War Graves Commission Office. Another excellent B & B, the Rum Jar is run by ex-pat Peter Morris. There are two double en-suite rooms and one twin en-suite room.

The Rum Jar B & B, Elverdingestraat 69, 8900 Ieper: Tel 0032 (0) 473 77 88 06.

Email – [peter.morris@telenet.be](mailto:peter.morris@telenet.be)



#### **CHERRY BLOSSOM**

An excellent family run B & B by ex-pats Jon and Liz Millward. Situated near Brandhoek, Vlamertinge - just off the N308/N38 towards Poperinge (NB. Relocated from their Grote Branderstraat premises to Casselsestraat nearby). Very friendly and Jon and Liz are most knowledgeable about the battlefields. Also open for light snacks & refreshments to non-residents Telephone: +32 (0)57 301555 Mobile: +32 (0)472 347694. Email: [cherryblossom@telenet.be](mailto:cherryblossom@telenet.be)

Cherry Blossom B&B, Casselsestraat 27, Ieper (Ypres) 8908, Belgium

#### **LE CHAT NOIR**     [www.lechatnoir.be](http://www.lechatnoir.be)

A family run b & b only 2 minutes walk from the main square. Popular with British visitors and researchers. Lovely rooms and quiet rear garden.

Le Chat Noir, Dicksmuidsestraat 91, te8900 Ieper, Belgium. Tel 0032 (0) 474595344.

**VARLET FARM    [www.varletfarm.com](http://www.varletfarm.com)**

Varlet Farm is about 2 kilometers away from Passchendaele (about 5 miles from Ypres) and was given the name by British soldiers during WW1, although nothing of the original farm remained by 1918. In 1922, the present building was commenced and is still a working farm today. The garage contains a collection of artefacts unearthed from the conflict, consisting of rifles, helmets, water bottles, hundreds of artillery shell fragments and bullets and countless other items. Three of the rooms of the farmhouse have been converted into guest rooms for quality Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Varlet Farm, Wallemolenstraat 43, 8920. Contact: 0032 (0) 51 777 859.

**ALLEEZIE [www.alleezie.be](http://www.alleezie.be)**

Alleezie is a self-catering holiday house for a maximum of ten persons, situated about 5 min walk from main square.

Alleezie, Veemarkt 21 8900, Ieper Tel: (0032) 51 77 06 73.

E-Mail: [alleezie@hotmail.com](mailto:alleezie@hotmail.com)

**SELF CATERING****MENIN GATE HOUSE    [www.meningatehouse.com](http://www.meningatehouse.com)**

'Menin Gate House' is a charming holiday home, and located 100m opposite the Menin Gate an ideal base to explore Ypres and Flanders Fields. Self-catering house with high quality decor.

Menin Gate House, Hoornwerk 1/8900 Ieper. Tel: +32 (0)477 270 061

email [info@meningatehouse.be](mailto:info@meningatehouse.be)

**Talbot House ('Toc H'), Poperinge    [www.talbothouse.be](http://www.talbothouse.be)**

Poperinge was situated a few kilometres behind the turmoil of battle on the Ypres Salient and became a 24-hour-a-day metropolis; in 1917 approximately 250,000 men were billeted in the area. On the 11th December, 1915, Chaplain Philip Clayton opened a "soldiers' house" – an "Every Man's Club", where all soldiers were welcome, regardless of rank. The house was named 'Talbot House' after Gilbert Talbot, the younger brother of head chaplain Neville Talbot, who had been killed in action on the 30th July, 1915. Gilbert became the symbol of the sacrifice of a 'golden generation' of young men. For three years, for hundreds of thousands, this site became 'a home from home', where they found a little bit of humanity, rest and peace. (The name Toc H comes from the initials of Talbot House from the WWI phonetic alphabet). The house was reopened to visitors in 1931 and self-catering accommodation is available. Staying here offers the visitor a unique chance to experience the place as a historical place of rest and relaxation, where you can meet people from all over the world. A voluntary British warden adds to the unique atmosphere of the house.

Talbot House (TOC H), Gasthuisstraat 43, 8970 Poperinge. Tel. 0032 (0) 57 33 32 28

**CAMPING****VZW Jeugdstadion    [www.jeugdstadion.be](http://www.jeugdstadion.be)**

Large camp site with excellent facilities, close to the town and only five minutes walk from the Menin Gate. For further details and bookings contact:

VZW Jeugdstadion, Leopold III Laan 16, 8900 Ieper, Belgium.

Tel - 0032 57 21 72 82



Email: [Info@Jeugdstadion.be](mailto:Info@Jeugdstadion.be)

**Camping Ypra      [www.camping-ypra.be](http://www.camping-ypra.be)**

Large camp site close to Kemmel village. The main site is open all year round, and is ideally situated for touring the Ypres Salient battlefields. There is also a shop and bar on site, and a children's swimming pool open in the summer months. For prices and further information contact:

Camping Ypra, Dingelaerstraat 2, 8956 Kemmel – Heuvelland, Belgium. Tel: 0032 57 44 46 31

Email: [camping.ypra@skynet.be](mailto:camping.ypra@skynet.be)

**SITES TO VISIT – YPRES TOWN and SALIENT**

**IN FLANDERS FIELDS      [www.inflandersfields.be](http://www.inflandersfields.be)**

Your first stop on any visit to the Ypres Salient should be the In Flanders Fields Museum, located in the magnificent building of the old Cloth Hall. This modern museum only opened a few years ago, and aims to tell the story of the fighting around Ypres using a mixture of original exhibits and photographs, coupled with the effective use of modern technology to enhance presentations. There is bookshop which sells maps of the area, a wealth of battlefield books, along with the usual postcards and souvenirs.



**MENIN GATE AND LAST POST CEREMONY**

**[www.lastpost.be](http://www.lastpost.be)**

The Menin Road had been the main supply route from the town into the Salient. Sir Reginald Blomfield, the commissioned architect, saw the site of the town gate, through which so many troops had passed, as the obvious site of the major memorial to the British and Empire missing from the battles around the town. Work began in 1923, and it was officially inaugurated in July 1927. It was meant to hold the names of all those with no known graves, but when designed the number was still not known. It turned out to be about 100,000, of which 54,896 are commemorated here. The remaining are recorded at Tyne Cot. The Gate also records the names of Ellesmere Port soldiers who were never found, including one of the three Bousfield brothers. Every evening at 8.00 the traffic is stopped, the road cordoned off, and buglers from the Ypres Fire Brigade blow the Last Post as part of a short ceremony, which includes the reading of the eulogy, a minutes silence and the laying of visitor's wreathes. This has happened every evening since 1928 – almost 30,000 times - with the exception of those years in the Second World War when the town was occupied.



**ST.GEORGE'S CHURCH (town centre)      [www.stgeorgesmemorialchurc hypres.com](http://www.stgeorgesmemorialchurc hypres.com)**

Saint George's Memorial Church commemorates the British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in the five battles fought for Ypres during the First World War. The movement to build an Anglican Church in Ieper to serve both as permanent memorial to the dead, but also as a meeting place for the visiting relatives got underway with the foundation of the Ypres League in 1920. Through its work, land was purchased, Sir Reginald Blomfield engaged as architect, and a new school added to the plans. Almost every item in the finished church served as a permanent memorial to a soldier who gave his life in France and Flanders, and both the church and the school were opened by the Bishop of Fulham on 24th March 1929.

**ESSEX FARM CEMETERY, BUNKERS AND MEMORIALS      [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)**

Diksmuidseweg Road (N369). Boezinge, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen

This is one of the best known First World War sites on the Ypres Salient. There are 1,200 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 103 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 19 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. It was here that Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a doctor of the Canadian Army Medical Corps, wrote the poem 'In Flanders Fields' in May 1915. Rifleman Valentine Joe Strudwick of the 8th Battalion the Rifle Brigade who died on January 14th 1916, is an often visited grave in Essex Farm. At fifteen he was one of the youngest fatalities in the British Army in World War One. Essex Farm was used as an advanced dressing station between April 1915 and August 1917, where first aid care was given to the wounded before casualties were transferred to a Casualty Clearing Station. Some of the concrete dugouts used by the medical forces remain today. A memorial to Lieutenant-Colonel McCrae and his poem is nearby. One of the graves here is for Private T Barratt of the South Staffordshire Regt who died on July 22nd 1917 aged 22 and who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery.



### **LANGEMARCK GERMANY CEMETERY AND VISITOR CENTRE**

(Also known as the Studentenfriedhof)

Behind an imposing gate of pink sandstone lie more than 44,000 soldiers, 25,000 of whom are buried in an anonymous mass grave. The site was called 'Students' Cemetery' because there were so many students among the fallen, many of whose names are engraved on the wooden panels in the entrance block. The new visitors' centre beside the cemetery tells the story of a soldier's life in the first months of war, the fleeing population, the horrors of the first gas attacks in April 1915 and the founding and development of this cemetery. The visitors' centre is a black tunnel, 25 meters long and 3 meters wide. On the left, seven screens tell the history of the site. On the right, there are three peepholes, so that the cemetery

can be seen from the dark tunnel. At the furthest end of the cemetery there is a group of statues by Emil Krieger of four grieving soldiers. Open: every day from 9am-6pm.

### **MEMORIAL MUSEUM PASSCHENDAELE 1917      [www.passchendaele.be](http://www.passchendaele.be)**

Kasteelpark, B.Pilstraat 5a B-8980 Zonnebeke

Tel: 0032(0)51 770 441

email: [info@passchendaele.be](mailto:info@passchendaele.be)

The museum tells the story of the Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres) 1917. The memory of the battle is told through images and movies, a large collection of historical artefacts and several life-like-diorama's. There is also an underground dugout tunnel with communications, a dressing post, headquarters, workplaces and dormitories. The museum is located in the historical castle of Zonnebeke, on the road to Tyne Cot Cemetery.

Open: every day 9am-5pm. (Closed 16 December-1 February).

### **TYNE COT MILITARY CEMETERY AND VISITORS CENTRE      [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)**

Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing is a burial ground for those that died on the Ypres Salient. It is the largest cemetery for Commonwealth forces in the world, for any war, and it is situated on a site just outside Passchendaele, originally a strong point in the German Flanders Line captured in October 1917. The name 'Tyne Cot' is said to have originated due to the serving Northumberland Fusiliers seeing a resemblance between the German concrete pill boxes, which still stand in the middle of the cemetery, and typical Tyneside workers' cottages. Initially, this was a small cemetery



holding around 340 graves of men who had died in the bunker aid post or nearby, but between 1919 and 1921 the exhumation companies brought in thousands of bodies from the surrounding battlefields into the new cemetery created under the Imperial War Graves Commission, which was finally inaugurated in 1927. A total of 11,956 soldiers of the Commonwealth are buried here, with only around 3,800 of the victims identified by name. The screen wall at the back of the cemetery commemorates a further 34,957 missing soldiers who died after 15 August 1917. On 12 July 2007 a new visitor centre and site improvements were opened by Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Paola of Belgium. The modern visitors' centre looks out over the cemetery and former battlefields, and contains an informative exhibition telling the story of the events that took place here.

The visitor's centre is open daily from 1 February to 30 November from 10am to 6pm, while the cemetery is open every day.



## **HILL 62 SANCTUARY WOOD TRENCH MUSEUM**

Hill 62, Canadalaan 26, B-8900 Zillebeke-Ieper, Belgium.

Tel: 0032 57 46 63 73

You will not find this site on the recommended list at the local tourist board and before your visit it is advised that you read some of the reviews online to appreciate why. Many visitors enjoy what the site offers – a collection of memorabilia with trench remains and tunnels in the surrounding grounds, but the authenticity of the site is frequently questioned together with the quality of the visitor experience.

## **FRONT LINE HOOGHE      [www.hotelkasteelhofthooghe.be/Engels/Emuseum.htm](http://www.hotelkasteelhofthooghe.be/Engels/Emuseum.htm)**

Kasteelhof 't Hooghe, Meenseweg 481, 8902 Zillebeke

Tel. 0032 (0)57 468 787      email - [kasteelhof.thooghe@belgacom.net](mailto:kasteelhof.thooghe@belgacom.net)

Open every day 9am-7pm

Just outside Ypres, along the Menin Road stands Hooghe, scene of some of the worst battles of the war. The fighting occurred within the grounds of Hooghe Chateau, a large stately home (now a hotel). The battles around the Chateau have now been carefully researched, and the grounds, still bearing many traces of the war, have recently been opened to the public for the first time. Visitors receive detailed information which explains the different features at Front Line Hooghe including where the trench lines had been, at one point only 15 metres apart. As visitors walk around the grounds once a scene of absolute devastation, they learn how thousands of men died as just a few square metres of mud changed hands time after time. Also at Front Line Hooghe are some concrete bunkers, one of which is now possible to enter and explore.

## **HOOGE CRATER MUSEUM      [www.hoogecrater.com](http://www.hoogecrater.com)**

Meenseweg 467 - 8902 Zillebeke.

Tel: 0032 (0)57 468 446      email - [info@hoogecrater.com](mailto:info@hoogecrater.com)

This museum is housed in a restored chapel located where one of the fiercest battles of Ypres was fought, and right opposite the 'Hooge Crater Cemetery'. The private museum houses life-size reconstructions of war scenes, and an extensive collection of weapons, equipment and photos.

Open every day 10am-6pm (Closed on Mondays.

Closed in January)

## **HILL 60**

In the years before the war the hill was created from the spoil excavated from the adjacent railway cutting, but during the war it became the scene of heavily fought over land, which included the war underground. Dozens of shell craters pock-mark the landscape, together with those caused from the detonation of



several mines. Countless soldiers worked in the tunnels and many died there, still buried beneath the clay. Consequently this is a respected site and is maintained unaltered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is one of the more remarkable sites on the Ypres salient, permanently open, with free access.

### **MESSINES RIDGE MINE CRATERS**

The first day of the Battle of the Messines Ridge (7th June 1917) saw the simultaneous firing of nineteen enormous deep mines under German strongpoints throughout the Ridge. Twenty-Five mines were actually excavated and charged, but five remain unfired below ground (one detonated during a thunderstorm in 1955). Many of the bunkers and craters that resulted were intentionally kept to honour the memory of those who died there, having been preserved and flooded, such as Spanbroekmolen Crater (known as the Pool of Peace and the largest of them all), which has public access and information boards on site. A number lie on private farmland, but several can still be viewed by the public. Further details can be found in the recommended guide books for the area, while an internet search using the above title will bring up several web sites showing precise locations on battlefield maps with overlaying modern maps, together with matching aerial photography.



### **BATTLEFIELD REFRESHMENTS**

*In addition to the numerous facilities in Ieper;*

#### **HOOGE CRATER      [www.hoogecrater.com](http://www.hoogecrater.com)**

Meenseweg 467, 8902 Zillebeke-Ieper.

Alongside the chapel museum is a pleasant cafe, serving drinks and lunches, which also houses an impressive 'trench art' collection.

Open: every day (except Mondays) 10am-6pm, Sunday 10am-9pm. Toilets onsite.

Tel: +32 (0)57/ 46 84 46

#### **HILL 60 TEA ROOM      [www.hill-60.be](http://www.hill-60.be)**

Zwarteleenstraat 40, 8902 Zillebeke-Ieper



New venture opened directly opposite the famous Hill 60 site. Food and drink, with good, clean toilets. Open every day, with the Tea room area open 14.00 - 18.00 every day.  
Tel: +32 (0)57/ 20 88 60

**T'OUDE GEMEENTEHUIS TEA ROOM & PUB, POELKAPELLE** [www.guesthouse-poelkappelle.be](http://www.guesthouse-poelkappelle.be)

Guynemerplein 5, 8920 Poelkappelle

The renovated former Town Hall in Poelkappelle is called t'Oude Gemeentehuis and is a popular Tea Room, bakery and pub. Visitors can enjoy freshly-made cakes, sandwiches, pancakes and waffles baked in the Belgian tradition. Cold platters, Ploughman's lunch and other light meals are available. Teas, coffees, soft drinks and many types of local Belgian beers are on offer.

Open: Bakery & Tea Room Daily (except Tuesdays) 7am-6.30pm

Tel: +32 (0)494 63 30 91



**RESTAURANT TAVERNE 'T NONNEBOS, ZONNEBEKE** [www.tnonnebos.be](http://www.tnonnebos.be)

Nonnebossen-oost 80, 8980 Zonnebeke

Popular restaurant serving meals ranging from snacks, light meals and assorted menus, located at the wood of Nonnebossen and close to Polygon Wood. Facilities include a large childrens' indoor and outdoor play area and outdoor seating.

Open: 11.00 hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sundays.

Closed: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Christmas 24 December to 1 January.

Telephone: +32 (0)57 - 46 86 28

**DE OUDE KAASMAKERIJ, PASSCHENDAELE** [www.deoudekaasmakerij.be](http://www.deoudekaasmakerij.be)

De Oude Kaasmakerij, 's Graventafelstraat 48a, 8980 Passchendaele

This cheese factory at Passchendaele welcomes visitors who wish to learn about the history of the production of this local cheese. Meals and refreshments are available at the bistro.

Open: June, July, August: Mon-Sat: 11am-6pm; Sun 11am-9pm. Other times see website.

Tel: +32 (0)51 77 70 05

**L'AUBERGE, PLOEGSTEERT** [www.auberge-ploegsteert.be](http://www.auberge-ploegsteert.be)

159 Rue de Messines, 7782 Ploegsteert.

Café & restaurant situated opposite the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing.

Open every day except Tuesday.

Battlefield tours also available as the 'Ploegsteert Sector

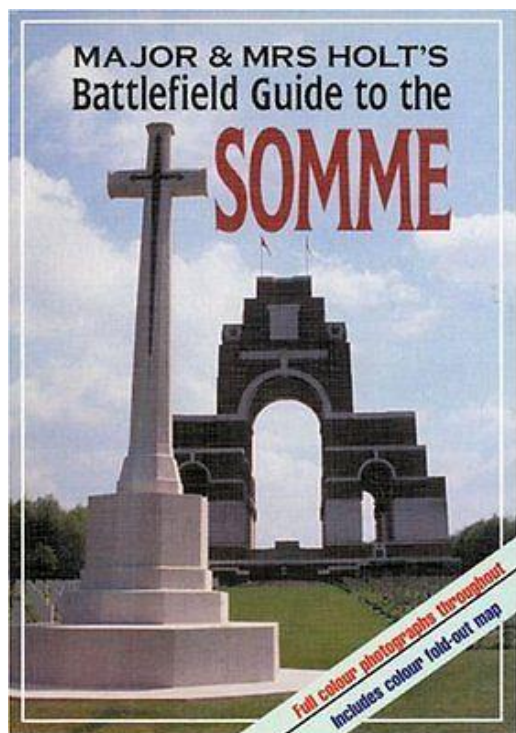
Battlefield Experience'. Website:

Tel: +32 (0) 56 58 84 41



## FRANCE

### Recommended Guidebooks



**Holt, Tonie & Valmai, *Major and Mrs Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Somme*** (Pen & Sword Books) [The Hols have many more guides available, see [www.guide-books.co.uk](http://www.guide-books.co.uk)]

This is a companion volume to the Salient guide and laid out in the same manner. It has over 130 colour photos and comes complete with a separate four colour map showing battle lines, bunkers, cemeteries, memorials and grid references linked to the book entries. Itineraries are very detailed and informative, with plenty of tourist information.

**Reed, Paul, *Walking the Somme***

(Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

Like Paul Reed's *Walking the Salient*, this is also an essential travelling companion for anyone visiting the Somme battlefields of 1916. His wide knowledge gained from many years of research and leading his own battlefield tours is reflected in his sixteen guided walks. From Gommecourt, Serre, Beaumont-Hamel and Thiepval to Montauban, Mametz Wood, High Wood, Delville Wood and Flers, he guides the walker across the major sites associated with the



fighting, all now to be found in the beautiful and peaceful Somme countryside.



**Reed, Paul, *Walking Arras*** (Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

*Walking Arras* marks the final volume in a trilogy of walking books about the British sector of the Western Front. The Battle of Arras falls between the Somme and Third Ypres; it marked the first British attempt to storm the Hindenburg Line defences, and the first use of lessons learned from the events of 1916. But it remains a forgotten part of the Western Front. This book gives a lead in seeing the ground connected with the fighting in 1917. Making a slight departure from the style of the previous two walking books, the chapters look at the historical background of an area and then separately describe a walk; with supplementary notes about the associated cemeteries in that region.

***Paul Reed also has several very useful websites:***

**Great War 1914-1918 Battlefields Website**

<http://battlefields1418.50megs.com/>

**Somme Battlefields**

**Passchendaele Remembered**

[www.somme-1916.com](http://www.somme-1916.com)

[www.ypres-1917.com](http://www.ypres-1917.com)

**Cave, Nigel, *Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Park*** (Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

Beaumont Hamel was the Somme sector assigned as an objective to the reservists of the London Division in 1916 and this book contains all the detail on the battle, and the battlefield as it is today, covering both battles of July and November. It contains excellent maps, and some amazing aerial pictures of the battlefield as it was in 1916. There are many stories of the men who fought and died there and there is also an excellent guide to the numerous battlefield cemeteries which abound in the area. A must read for the serious student of the Great War, and also an excellent guide for the visitor.



**Coombs, Rose E.B. ,** *Before Endeavours Fade* (1986)

This book, described in the Belgium section, also covers Battlefield sites in France.

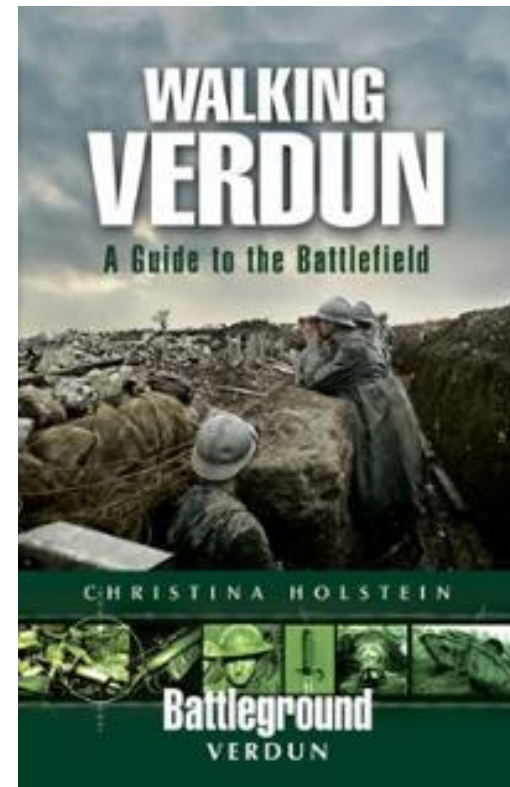
**Hughes, Gareth,** *Visiting the Somme and Ypres Battlefields Made Easy* (Pen & Sword)

A Helpful Guide Book for Groups and Individuals. Also describe in the Belgium section.

**Holstein, Christina,** *Walking Verdun: A Guide to the Battlefield*

(Battleground Europe Series, Pen & Sword)

Moving further afield to the eastern sectors of the front defended by the French army, this guide is ideal with its various walks, accurately described and easy to follow. On 21 February 1916 the German Fifth Army launched a devastating offensive against French forces at Verdun and set in motion one of the most harrowing and prolonged battles of the Great War. By the time the struggle finished ten months later, over 650,000 men had been killed or wounded or were missing, and the terrible memory of the battle had been etched into the histories of France and Germany. This epic trial of military and national strength cannot be properly understood without visiting, and walking, the battlefield, and this is the purpose of Christina Holstein's invaluable guide. In a series of walks she takes the reader to all the key points on the battlefield, many of which have attained almost legendary status - the spot where Colonel Driant was killed, the forts of Douaumont, Vaux and Souville, the Mort Homme ridge, and Verdun itself.



## FRANCE – SOMME AREA



## TOURIST OFFICES

**Comité Départemental du Tourisme de La Somme** [www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)

21 rue Ernst Cauvin, 80000 Amiens, France

Tel: 0033 22 71 22 71

### **Office du Tourisme Albert**

9 rue Gambetta, BP 82, 80300 Albert, France

Tel: 0033 3 22 75 16 42, Fax: 0033 3 22 75 11 72

Email: [office\\_tourisme\\_albert@altavista.fr](mailto:office_tourisme_albert@altavista.fr)

(Check opening times, which are often erratic, and an English speaking member of staff is not always available)

### **Somme Battlefields [www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)**

A most informative website by the Somme Tourist Authority. Information on where to stay, places to visit, events and so on.

(French tourist site - [www.somme-tourisme.com](http://www.somme-tourisme.com)).

## **ACCOMMODATION**

### **HOTEL DE LA PAIX**

Popular with British visitors and situated in heart of Albert, it has a superb restaurant that can be used by non-guests as well. The owners Madame Isobelle Daudigny and her husband speak English.

43 rue Victor Hugo, 80300 Albert, France. Tel: 0033 322 75 01, Fax: 0033 3 22 75 44 17.

### **LE ROYAL PICARDIE (BEST WESTERN)**

**[www.royalpicardie.com](http://www.royalpicardie.com)**

Containing 24 rooms this up market hotel has a large restaurant and bar. It is located just outside Albert on the road to Amiens, central location for touring the Somme.

Avenue General Leclerc, 80300 Albert, France. Tel: 0033 3 22 75 37 00, Fax: 0033 3 2 75 60 19.

Email: [ROYALPICARDIE@wanadoo.fr](mailto:ROYALPICARDIE@wanadoo.fr)

### **IBIS HOTEL ALBERT [www.ibishotel.com/gb/hotel-6234-ibis-albert/index.shtml](http://www.ibishotel.com/gb/hotel-6234-ibis-albert/index.shtml)**

Parc d'Activité Henri Potez, 80300 – Albert, France. Tel:

(+33)3/22755252 Fax: (+33)3/22745454

Email: [H6234@accor.com](mailto:H6234@accor.com)

### **HOTEL de la BASILIQUE, ALBERT [www.hoteldelabasilique.fr](http://www.hoteldelabasilique.fr)**

Hotel located in the centre of Albert, in the heart of the Somme battlefield area

3-5 Rue Gambetta, 80300 Albert, France. Tel: 0033 3 22 75 04 71

Email: [contact@hoteldelabasilique.fr](mailto:contact@hoteldelabasilique.fr)



## **BED AND BREAKFAST**

### **BATTERY VALLEY FARM [www.batteryvalleyfarm.com](http://www.batteryvalleyfarm.com)**

Mireille and Frederic Saingier run a working farm in the heart of the Somme battlefield situated on the rear slopes of the Schwaben Redoubt and close to several sites of Remembrance, such as the Thiepval Memorial, the Ulster Tower and Newfoundland Memorial Park. B & B accommodation is provided, and there is also a lounge and kitchen available to guests.

Frédéric et Mireille Saingier, 9 rue de Beaucourt, 80300 Grandcourt

email: [f.saingier@orange.fr](mailto:f.saingier@orange.fr) Tel: 0322747848 / 0689306411





**'LES ALOUETTES'      [www.lesalouettes.net](http://www.lesalouettes.net)**

Within easy reach of the front line Somme villages, the B&B has three available rooms and is run by ex-pats Vic & Diane Piuk. They will also cater for evening meal on request and have a chalet nearby that can be rented on a self-catering basis. Vic is also an experienced Battlefield guide.

Vic & Diane Piuk, 10 Rue du Mantier, 80360 Hardecourt aux Bois, France.

Tel /Fax 00 333 22 85 14 56    Mobile 00 336 71 78 40 74

email: lesalouettes2003@yahoo.co.uk



**BERNAFAY WOOD**

<http://bandbbernafaywood.fr.ht/>

A guest house situated in the renovated historic Montauban railway station situated in the heart of Bernafay Wood, a serene setting 1 kilometer to the East of the village of Montauban de Picardie, approximately, 12 kilometers East of Albert and 45 kilometers from Amiens The old station was the site of part of the British 30<sup>th</sup> Division's assault on 1 July and 2 1916, and was rebuilt like the original after the war in 1922. The railway was discontinued in 1950. Run by Christine and Jean-Pierre Matte, Bernafay Wood guest house is a

living landmark, a fascinating place to stay for anyone interested in the Great War or just curious to be part of history and to spend time upon a famous battlefield.

55-57 Grande Rue, Bois Bernafay, 83000 Montauban de Picardie, France. Tel: 033 3 22 85 02 47.

email :BERNAFAYWOOD@aol.com

**LES GALETS      [www.lesgalets.com](http://www.lesgalets.com)**

Built over the 2nd line trench, occupied by the 16th Middlesex Public Schools Battalion on 1 July 1916, Les Galets provides the rare combination of 'front-line' accommodation within the comfortable surroundings of a modern English-run guest house.

Route de Beaumont, 80560 Auchonvillers, France, Tel: 0033 3 22 76 28 79

Email: julie.renshaw@hotmail.com

**LE SARS      [www.memorysomme.com](http://www.memorysomme.com)**

The house, built in 1920, is situated at Le Sars which was captured the 7 October 1916 by the 23rd Division. It is closed to the Butte de Warlencourt which was the furthest point that the British Armies reached during the Big Push of 1916.

37 Rue National, 62450 Le Sars, France. Tel: 00 33 3 21 070 501

Email: [contact@memorysomme.com](mailto:contact@memorysomme.com)

**BUTTERWORTH FARM**

[www.butterworth-cottage.com](http://www.butterworth-cottage.com)

Butterworth Farm is located in Pozieres, a village in the heart of the Somme. B & B or self-catering for up to fourteen persons in a completely renovated building on the family farm. Butterworth Farm is named in memory of the composer George Butterworth, who was killed on 5 August 1916 close to this farm. His body was never found and his name is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

Marie et Bernard Delattre, Route de Bazentin, Chemin George Butterworth,

80300 Pozieres, France. Telephone: +33 (0)3 22 74 04 47

Email: [contact@butterworth-cottage.com](mailto:contact@butterworth-cottage.com)

Mobile: +33 (0)6 22 30 28 02

## **FREEMAN FARM**      [www.lostgeneration1914-18.com](http://www.lostgeneration1914-18.com)

Freeman Farm is located in the village of Miraumont on the Somme battlefield. It is within a few miles of the major battle sites for the 1916 and 1918 Somme battles by car, on foot, by bicycle or motorbike. It is about 30 minutes distance by car to explore the city of Arras and the Artois battlefields. The house was built in 1922 and has recently undergone major refurbishment whilst retaining many of its original features. Hosts Tim and Gill Wright offer double, single or twin bed accommodation combined with the flexibility of full or half board, sharing an evening meal with your hosts or dining in private in the guests' dining room.

Tim Wright is also an experienced battlefield guide offering a range of battlefield tours to suit both first-time visitors and those wishing for a bespoke tour. Tim is the Chairman and a founding member of the Somme branch of The Western Front Association.

Freeman Farm, 9 Rue de la Gare, Miraumont 80300, France. Tel: 00 33 322 757 203

Email: [enquiries@lostgeneration1914-18.com](mailto:enquiries@lostgeneration1914-18.com)      Mobile: 00 44 79 1914 18 08



## **L'AMARTINIERRE**

Situated in the Somme area near Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park, accommodation is offered in a typical farm-house in 3 en suite bedrooms, with a kitchen/living room also available. Host Christine speaks fluent English. Free WiFi.

1, rue de Mailly, 80560 Courcelles-au-Bois, France. Tel: +0033 036 02.70.25.3

## **No. FIFTY6**      [www.number56.co.uk](http://www.number56.co.uk)

No. Fifty6 B&B is located in the village of La Boisselle in the centre of the 1916 Somme battlefield. Hosts Julie and David Thomson have created comfortable, tastefully decorated accommodation ideally situated for exploring the main sites of the Somme, and equally convenient for day trips to the battlefields near the cities of Arras and Amiens. Additional facilities at No. Fifty6 include the use of the garden and patio, Lounge with TV, games, use of the WW1 library, and secure WIFI internet access. There is also a caravan available which sleeps up to four in the grounds of the house. Julie and David offer tours of the Somme battlefields called their "Walk with Me" Experience. They will be delighted to tailor a tour to include your family connections with the Somme or fit a tour around the time you are able to spend on the Somme.

Julie and David Thomson, 56 Route de Bapaume, 80300 La Boisselle, France

Email: [enquiries@number56.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@number56.co.uk)      Tel: +33 (0)3 22 75 12 02

## **OTAGO VIEW**      [www.fieldsoffrance.com](http://www.fieldsoffrance.com)

Situated in the village of Flers, all four rooms are decorated with period artefacts and all have views over the Somme battlefields or the village. The guest rooms have a dedicated guest bathroom on the same floor.

Evening meals, packed lunches, bike hire and guided tours and walks are available by arrangement.

Contact: Peter and Hilary Smith, Otago View, 48 rue Principale, 80360 Flers, France

Email: [mail@fieldsoffrance.com](mailto:mail@fieldsoffrance.com)      Tel: +33 (0)3 22 85 47 23

## **THE SILENT PICKET**      [www.silentpicket.com](http://www.silentpicket.com)

Based in Martinpuich in the middle of what was the Somme battlefield, the Silent Picket is an ideal base from which to explore the history of the area. Surrounded by rolling French farmland, it is an equally ideal place for a quiet few days simply enjoying the flavour of France. The Silent Picket





offers high quality bed and continental breakfast accommodation. Packed lunches can be provided on request and an evening meal can be provided per person including wine or beer. Bicycles, Linesman digital mapping PDA, Tom Tom GPS available for hire at a daily rate. Extensive WW1 library, free WIFI internet access, research for family history battlefield enquiries and guided tours for small groups or larger coach-sized groups is available by request.

John and Jennie Knight, The Silent Picket, 10 Grande Rue, 62450 Martinpuich, France.

Telephone: +33 (0)3 21 15 37 70 Mobile: +33 (0)64 059 1326

Email: [silentpicket@me.com](mailto:silentpicket@me.com)

## SELF CATERING



### CHAVASSE FARM [www.chavasseferme.com](http://www.chavasseferme.com)

#### *Somme Battlefield Self-Catering Cottages*

Situated in the quiet village of Hardecourt aux Bois at the point where the British and French Armies launched into The Battle of the Somme, Chavasse Farm and Snowden House at Longueval are ideally situated for exploring the Somme battlefields. The Farm is within walking distance of some of the most infamous battlefield sites, including Guillemont, Maltz Horn Farm, Trones and Bernafay Woods to name but a few. Delville Wood is four minutes and Thiepval, The Ulster Tower and Albert are just fifteen minutes by car. The Farm

has three separate cottages available to rent as self catering or catering options are available (Breakfasts, packed lunches and evening meals).

80360 Hardecourt-aux-Bois, France. Tel No: 0044 (0)7855850889

Email: [chavasseferme@aol.com](mailto:chavasseferme@aol.com)

### ORCHARD FARM

[www.orchardfarmsomme.com](http://www.orchardfarmsomme.com)

Orchard Farm, is a traditional courtyard farmhouse situated in the heart of the Somme battlefields in the village of Combles, on the Circuit de Souvenir.

Run by Martin and Kate Pegler, Martin is a professional historian, author, and militaria specialist for the BBC TV's Antiques Roadshow. The Pegler's will help you plan your tour, and also offer bespoke tours of the area by car or motorcycle, but can also give advice on what to see and do if you wish to do your own exploring. B & B accommodation is in the main house, while there is also a self-catering gite available too.

2 rue Gaston Caron, 80360 Combles, France Tel: 0033 (0)3 22 86 56 72

Email: [thepegler@orchardfarmsomme.com](mailto:thepegler@orchardfarmsomme.com)



### AVRIL WILLIAMS' GUEST HOUSE & TEA ROOMS 'OCEAN VILLAS'

[www.avrilwilliams.eu](http://www.avrilwilliams.eu)

Avril Williams moved into an old abandoned farmhouse in the village of Auchonvillers in 1992 and began her renovations, turning it into what has become a popular and well-respected destination for visitors to the Somme battlefields. The site at 'Ocean Villas' (named after the British soldiers' nickname for the village) comprises a variety of facilities for visitors to the battlefields: there is bed and breakfast accommodation, the Tea Rooms serve food for individuals and groups, there is a recently

opened WW1 and WW2 museum collection, a cellar used by British troops in 1914-1918, and a section of original British trench in the process of being restored. An apartment sleeping up to six is available and parties of over fifteen can also be catered for at discounted rates. Bicycle hire and guided tours are also available.

10, rue Delattre, 80560 Auchonvillers, France. Tel: +33 (0)3 22 76 23 66

Email: avwilliams@orange.fr

### **DINNAKEN HOUSE      [www.dinnakenhouse.com](http://www.dinnakenhouse.com)**

Dinnaken house is a large detached property prominently located in the quiet Somme village of Flers, overlooking the famous 'Tommy' memorial to the 41st Division. The house has been fitted out to an extremely comfortable standard to meet the needs of visitors to the area and offers excellent accessibility to all major sites on the Somme Battlefields. Accommodation for 1-8 persons. A large library of books is available throughout the home including many Somme reference books and WW1 titles. Free WiFi.

Dinnaken House, No.1 place des Britanniques, Flers, France Tel: +44 (0)7917 460 613

Email: rory.dinnakenhouse@btinternet.com



### **'LES EGLANTINES'      [www.les-eglantines.co.uk](http://www.les-eglantines.co.uk)**

'Les Eglantines' is a traditional and rustic farmhouse offering both B & B and self-catering for up to six persons in the heart of the Somme area. Quietly situated at the edge of the village of Mailly Maillet, 'Les Eglantines' is a detached property built in 1903 and recently renovated. It has a large enclosed garden providing a relaxing environment for both adults and children and is a perfect base to explore the area. WW1 books and maps are available and the house also has a WiFi connection. Packed lunches and evening meals are available on request.

Brigitte de Cuyper, Les Eglantines, 29 rue des Cordeliers, 80560 Mailly Maillet, France.

Email: brigittedecuyper@yahoo.com Telephone (UK): 07515 643 235

### **MAISON PAULETTE      [www.maisonpaulettesomme.com](http://www.maisonpaulettesomme.com)**

Maison Paulette is a two-storey house attached to the home of its English owners who are resident all year. It has two double bedrooms and facilities to provide comfortable self-catering accommodation for four or five people. Wi-fi use is included. The house is close to Péronne and the l'Historial de la Grande Guerre, the famous Great War museum, and the Circuit de Souvenir, the 1916 Somme Battlefield route.

Kate and Robert Hower, 3 rue de Bernes, 80200 Cartigny, France

Email: maisonpaulette@hotmail.co.uk Telephone: +33 (0)322 86 61 46

### **SNOWDEN HOUSE**

**[www.snowdenhouse.co.uk](http://www.snowdenhouse.co.uk)**

Situated in the village of Longueval on the Circuit of Remembrance, Snowden House is ideally located in the heart of the Somme Battlefields. One minute from Delville Wood and ten minutes from the Theipval Memorial. The house and its grounds were positioned on the front line for six weeks during the Battle of the Somme. Snowden House sleeps up to 14 guests in 5 bedrooms. The front bedrooms look over Delville





Wood the rear Bedrooms look over Trones and Bernafay Woods. The living-room and dining room both have wood burning fires and there is a Great War library with hundreds of books covering the Somme Battlefields. Use of Sky TV, DVD, computer, broadband internet is also available. Guided tours to the battlefields of the Somme and other regions of the Western Front are available from the owners of Snowden House and fellow experienced guides of the WW1 battlefields.  
 Snowden House, 2 Rue de Péronne, 80360 Longueval, France  
 email: chavasseferme@aol.com Tel: Jonathan 07855850889

## CAMPING

### ALBERT – ‘CAMPING LE VELODROME’

A 2 star site with seventy-five pitches on the outskirts of Albert.

Camping Le Velodrome, Allée Charles Queret, 80300 Albert, Somme. Tel: +33 3 22 75 22 53.



### AUTHUILLE – ‘CAMPING BELLVUE’

A ninety-six pitch site popular with English visitors close to Thiepval. Shower and toilet facilities, plus a restaurant with a good reputation. Open 1st March - 31st October

Camping Bellvue, 80300 Authuille, France. Tel: + 33 3 22 74 59 29. Fax: +33 3 22 74 05 14.

### MIRAUMONT – CAMPING LA HERELLE

A sixty-five pitch site situated on the outskirts of Miraumont, where there is also a post office, shop and a bar that serves light food. Open 1st April - 15th October.

Camping La Herelle, Rue Poulain, 80360 Miraumont, France. Tel: +33 3 22 74 84 83.



## SITES TO VISIT

The battlefield of the Somme is on an area north of the river roughly between the towns of Bapaume and Albert. It is one of the most important British battlefields in France with much to view and consequently it is one of the most visited. Between the two towns is a beautiful rural countryside, but there are few amenities, so it is advisable to be prepared for your days out. Detailed guidebooks will give comprehensive information of what there is to see, but what follows is a listing of the some of the main sites which are regarded as essential for those who have not visited before.

### THIEPVAL MEMORIAL TO THE MISSING [www.thiepval.org.uk](http://www.thiepval.org.uk)

Thiepval is the largest and one of the most poignant memorials to British soldiers anywhere in the world. Standing on an isolated windswept position on the Somme, the site dominates the area and can be seen from most of the Somme battlefield. Finally inaugurated in 1932 from a design by Edwin Lutyens, there are

73,357 names on the stone panels reaching to the arches of the memorial, listing those men missing after the conflicts on the Somme battlefields. An excellent visitor centre provides informative background to battles and the men who are recorded on the memorial (computer points are provided for visitors to access the database). There is also a good bookshop, plus modern toilet facilities.

Open every day 9am-5pm from 1 November to 28 February and 10am-6pm from 1 March to 31 October.

8 Rue de l'Ancre, 80300 Thiepval, France. Tel: 00333 2274 6047 email: [thiepval@historial.org](mailto:thiepval@historial.org)



### **ULSTER TOWER, THIEPVAL**

The Ulster Tower commemorates the men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who fell on the Somme in 1916, and to all Ulstermen who died in the First World War. Built in 1921 with finance through public subscription the tower is an exact replica of a tower near the 36th Division's training ground in Belfast. There is a memorial room and a visitors centre with displays and a film about the attack on Thiepval. Drinks, snacks and books are also on sale, and there are clean and modern toilet facilities.

Today the site is owned by the Somme Association, and the Ulster Tower is open every day except Monday. Open: 10.30am-5.30pm (April-September) and 10.30am-4.30pm (October-November & February-March).

Closed December-January. Entrance is free.  
Tel: 0033 3 22 74 81 11.

### **NEWFOUNDLAND MEMORIAL PARK, BEAUMONT HAMEL**

Situated some 6 miles north of Albert, this is one of the most-visited places on the Western Front. Now owned by the Canadian Government, the Park has been left as far as possible in a preserved state since 1918. Within the boundary of the site are the front and support lines of the British and German positions as they were on 1st July 1916, the day that the 1st Battalion Newfoundland Regiment suffered grievous casualties as they attempted to advance. The Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park was officially opened by Earl Haig on June 7, 1925. The monument of the great bronze caribou, emblem of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, stands on the highest point overlooking St. John's Road and the slopes beyond. At the base of the statue, three tablets of bronze carry the names of 814 members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve, and the Mercantile Marine who gave their lives in the First World War and have no known grave.

Access to the Newfoundland Memorial Park is free and the park is open at all hours.

Visitor Centre on site. Open: March-October 10am-6pm; November-February 9pm-5pm. (On Mondays the Visitor Centre opens at 11am). Closed: Mid-December to mid-January.

Guided tours are available from 1st February to 30th November.

Tel: +33 (0)3 22 76 70 86





## **HAWTHORN RIDGE MINE CRATER**

Lying to west of the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel, this crater was created after the detonation of just over 40,000lbs of ammonal signalling the start of the Battle of the Somme at 7.20 hours on the morning of 1 July 1916. The detonation was filmed by the army photographer Geoffrey Malins for his film *The Somme*, and the short clip of this famous footage has been replayed in countless documentaries ever since. The crater produced from the mine's explosion was 140 metres long, 90 metres wide and 25 metres deep. The crater can be visited today, although it is not as 'visitor friendly' as Lochnagar. There is a French sign by the side of the road, and a narrow steep track on the left leads to the crater. In fact, this is actually a double crater, although it is so overgrown with trees and vegetation that it is very difficult to see very much at all. The original crater was later the site of a second mine set off on 13 November 1916. However, with the aid of trench maps it is a useful vantage point to understand the positioning of British and German lines across the countryside, and from here it is a short walk along the ridge track to Newfoundland Memorial Park.

## **LOCHNAGAR MINE CRATER**

[www.lochnagarcrater.org](http://www.lochnagarcrater.org)

Situated in La Boisselle, the Lochnagar Crater resulted from the blowing of a mine at 07.28 on the morning of 1 July 1916, as well as 16 others, which marked the start of the Battle of the Somme. Debris rose some 4,000ft into the air with the crater measuring 300ft across and 90ft deep (after the war reduced to 200ft wide and 81ft deep by 1919). The site today is privately owned, having been purchased by Richard Dunning on 1 July 1978 to preserve the crater and to create a memorial in perpetuity. An annual ceremony takes place every year at the wooden cross at the crater's edge on 1 July to commemorate the first day of the Somme offensive, and a small, more informal ceremony on 11 November.



## **DELVILLE WOOD, VISITORS CENTRE, LONGUEVAL**

[www.delvillewood.com](http://www.delvillewood.com)

Although men from a variety of nations fought and died here, Delville Wood has become the supreme symbol of South Africa's sacrifice and holds an eminent place in country's military history. This was the site of the first major engagement of the 1st South African Infantry Brigade in July 1916, consequently the site was purchased by the South African government in 1920, recognising its symbolism. The South African National Monument was unveiled on 10 October 1926, within a newly planted wood - the pre-war wood having been completely destroyed, save for one last tree. On the 11 November 1986, the South African Commemorative Museum was unveiled, designed as replica of the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. Visitor centre on site, plus a small shop selling books, postcards and snacks/drinks. There are also toilets, and picnic benches outside. The Museum is free, and open every day (except Monday) 10am-5.30pm April-Oct, and 10pm-4pm Feb-April/Oct-November. Closed late November to early February.

## **HISTORIAL DE LA GRANDE, PERONNE**

[www.historial.org](http://www.historial.org)

Located in some of the old ramparts and chateau in the centre of Peronne, this is a very modern museum of the First World War. Opened in 1992, this is an international museum and shows the experiences of the major participants in the First World War and the impact of this conflict on the 20th century. The museum displays show the visitor what life was like for the soldier in the front line trenches, plus the effect of the war on the civilian



populations. There is an excellent film in a comfortable theatre and a good bookshop, plus a relaxing café overlooking the Cam Pond with seating indoors or on the terrace. Modern toilet facilities.

Open: 9.30am-6pm 1 April-30 September, 9.30-5pm October-March (Closed Weds for group visits).

Closed mid-December-end of February.

Historial de la Grande Guerre, BP 20063, 80201 Peronne.

Tel : 03 22 83 14 18

### **MUSEE SOMME 1916, ALBERT**      [www.musee-somme-1916.eu](http://www.musee-somme-1916.eu)

As the Second World War approached, the local council of Albert decided to build seven shelters and fortify the underground tunnels below the Basilica square to protect the local population. In 1991 it was decided to locate a museum to honour the men of the First World War inside the largest tunnel (10 metres underground and 250 metres long, from the Basilica through to the public gardens). Opened the following year, the museum reconstructs realistic scenes from the lives of soldiers on the Somme battlefields with reconstructions of trench scenes, dugouts, trench mortar positions and tunnelling. There is an introductory film, with thousands of items on display, and many photographs and maps. The route takes you through a shop selling books and safe battlefield relics and out into the public gardens.

Open: 1 March-15 December, 9.30am-12.00 and 2pm-6pm. July-August, open all day.

Rue Anicet Godin, 80300 ALBERT

Tel: 0033 (0)3 22 75 16 17    email: [musee@somme1916.org](mailto:musee@somme1916.org)



## **ARRAS-SOUCHEZ AREA**

### **NOTRE DAME DE LORETTE**

Ablain St.-Nazaire French Military Cemetery, also known as 'Notre Dame de Lorette', is the largest French military cemetery in the world with 39,985 graves. Within the cemetery is the Memorial Chapel, known for its stained glass and the crypt containing one of the mass graves. In centre of the cemetery is the 150ft Lantern Tower completed in 1925, which at night emits a beam of light reaching almost 50 miles across the surrounding countryside, revolving five times every minute. In the base of the tower is a room containing coffins holding an unknown French soldier from every major conflict of this century in which French troops have been involved.



### **MUSEE VIVIAN 1914-1918, NOTRE DAME DE LORETTE, SOUCHEZ**

The museum is located on the summit of the ridge at Notre Dame de Lorette, next to the French national military cemetery. There are over 2,000 items on display in the museum, showing life in the French Army and its battles in Artois. The exhibition includes equipment, uniforms, documents, photographs and a walk-through reconstructed trench and bunker system animated with lasers. A commentary to accompany your visit can be selected in French or English. An adjoining room contains a series of diorama viewers with 400 rare stereoscopic (3-D) images taken during the war. Immediately behind the museum is an area of reconstructed battlefield trenches re-dug in their original locations, and a selection of artillery pieces,



machine guns, shells, barbed wire and other battlefield detritus. A small shop sells souvenirs, books and postcards.

Open: Daily 9am-8pm. The museum is owned by David Bardiaux who has collected over 3,500 artefacts since childhood. David also owns the Musée Militaire de la Targette 1914-1918 (see below). Discounted rates for visits to both museums are available.

**L'Estaminet de Lorette** - bar, restaurant, Salon de Thé - located next to the museum and the cemetery. The restaurant is open from March-November. Toilets are available, but only for use by patrons.

Musée Vivant 1914-1918, Notre Dame de Lorette, 62153 Souchez, France

Tel: +33 (0)3 21 45 15 80



## VIMY RIDGE

Vimy Ridge rises some 200ft above the Douai Plain to the east and was one of the strongest defensive positions on the Western Front. German forces held the summit until the Battle of Vimy Ridge, fought from April 9-12 1917, when it was taken by the Allies, and it was the only occasion when all Canadian troops on the Western Front fought together as one united force. Consequently, the ridge is of particular importance to Canada's remembrance of the war, and the surrounding land was given to the Canadian government and preserved in its battle-scarred condition. On the top of the ridge the memorial's spectacular twin towers constructed in Adriatic marble on the summit look down on the plain below, while the wall behind the memorial carries the names of 11,285 missing Canadian soldiers. Some 620,000 Canadians served in WWI, 66,655 lost their lives and of those, about 20,000 have no known grave. Lower down the ridge adjacent to the visitor centre are trenches lined with concrete sand bags to ensure their preservation, surrounded by craters pock-marking no man's land and beyond. Close by is the public access entrance to the Grange Subway, one of the tunnel systems built to get the attacking Allied troops into the front line area safe from enemy shellfire.

In the visitor centre there are maps, presentation boards explaining the battle, photographs, militaria exhibits and personal artefacts on display. There is also a film showing documentary footage.

A small range of postcards, books and pamphlets related to the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the Canadian National Memorial is available at the reception desk.

Guided tours of the tunnels and trenches are available free of charge, subject to availability. Tours last for about 50 minutes.



Memorial open all hours. Visitor centre open: Daily Feb-Nov, Tue-Sun 9am-5pm, Mon 10am-5pm; Dec-Jan reduced hours.

Canadian National Vimy Memorial, 62580 Vimy

Tel: +33 3 22 76 70 86 email: [vimy.memorial@vac-acc.gc.ca](mailto:vimy.memorial@vac-acc.gc.ca)

### **MUSEE MILITAIRE de la TARGETTE, NEUVILLE-SAINT-VAAST**

Extensive collection of small artefacts from the First World War including weapons, helmets, propaganda material, military documents, early gasmasks and much more, plus a few small dioramas. Small shop on site. The museum is owned by David Bardiaux, who also owns the Musée Viviant 1914-1918 (see above). Discounted rates for visits to both museums are available.

Route National 48, Neuville-Saint-Vaast

Tel: +33 (0)3-21591776

## **BATTLEFIELD REFRESHMENTS**

### **OLD BLIGHTY TEA ROOM, LA BOISSELLE:**

Run by English couple Jon and Alison Haslock, it is situated in the village close to road which leads to the Lochnagar Mine Crater. Parking for cars, good toilets and a range of food, plus a small bookshop selling books, postcards and relics. Contact details:

1 RUE GEORGES CUVILLIER - 80300 Ovillers-la-boisselle, France.

Tel : 0033 3 22 64 09 16

### **BEAUCOURT [www.beaucourt-station.net](http://www.beaucourt-station.net)**

Open every day from 11am to 7pm. Snack: pizzas, salads, fish and chips, roast chicken, sandwiches, etc Tea Room: English tea (Tetley and Yorkshire), cakes and ice-creams. Shop: hand made crockery with poppies, AND products containing poppies. Contact details:

Philippe FERET, 1, route d'Albert – 80300 BEAUMONT-HAMEL

Email: [beaucourt-station@wanadoo.fr](mailto:beaucourt-station@wanadoo.fr) Tel: 0033 3 22 76 14 18



### **TOMMY CAFE, POZIÈRES**

The Tommy Café is run and owned by Dominique Zanardi and is located on the main Albert-Bapaume road in the middle of the village. It operates as a bar, lunches and evening meals are available, and there is a great deal of First World War material on display, including a life-size trench system! Groups are welcome, but must book in advance.

TEL/FAX: 0033 3 22 74 82 84.



### **AVRIL WILLIAMS' GUEST HOUSE & TEA ROOMS 'OCEAN VILLAS' [www.avrilwilliams.eu](http://www.avrilwilliams.eu)**

Tea Rooms serving hot and cold food run by Avril Williams and her family. Open every day from 09.00 - 17.00. Continental and English breakfast served between 09.00 to 11.00. Hot and cold food available all day. Range of cakes and snacks. Packed lunches can be ordered and collected.

Well stocked bar with beers on draught.

10, rue Delattre, 80560 Auchonvillers, France



### **ULSTER MEMORIAL TOWER TEA ROOM**

The Ulster Memorial Tower Visitor Centre has a small café/tea room serving hot and cold drinks, snacks and confectionery.

Opening Hours

Tuesday - Sunday: 10.00 - 18.00 hours (May - September)

Tuesday - Sunday: 10.00 - 17.00 hours (March and April, October and November)

Closed on Mondays and for the months of December, January and February.