**Battlefields 2023: Proposal for the Board of Directors**

**Proposed Dates:** Saturday 15th July 2023 – Tuesday 18th July 2023

**Proposed Destination:** France (the area around the Somme) and Belgium (Ypres and Bruges)

**Cost of Trip:** £425 per student

**Aims of the trip:** 1. to develop and understanding of the terrain, conditions and hardships faced by soldiers, and show empathy for soldiers fighting in the Battle of the Somme.

2. to compare the horrors of the Somme to those in Ypres faced by British soldiers in WWI.

 3. to develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, a different culture.

**Cost of the trip includes:**

* Coach and driver for the durations of the trip from pick up at school on Saturday until drop off at school on Tuesday.
* Ferry crossing from Dover to Calais and the return crossing.
* WWI Guide for the duration of our stay in France and Belgium (the guide is known to us as we use the same one each year).
* three nights full board accommodation (including one evening meal in Den Anker restaurant in Ypres)
* Comprehensive insurance including their Covid Cancellation Cover
* Printed hoodie
* Poppy cross to lay at a cemetery/memorial of their choice (and additional for some students to lay at the grave/memorial of relatives).
* Evening entertainment at the accommodation
* Participation in the last post ceremony in Ypres

**Payment Plan:**

* Initial payment (deposit): £50 by Friday 8TH April 2022
* Second payment: £100 by Friday 16th September 2022
* Final payment: £203 Friday 31st  March 2023

**Sample Itinerary:**

Saturday 15th July:

Meet at school 4.30 am.

Arrive at The Old Abbey (Ypres) about 18.00 hrs (central European time) Visit St Omer on route if time allows Guide will join group here.

Sunday 16th July:  Somme

08.00 hrs: Depart for the Somme

10.00 hrs: Newfoundland Memorial Park

11.00 hrs: Sheffield Memorial Park

12.00 hrs: Mill Road Cemetery (school will lay crosses here)

12.30 hrs: Ulster Tower Group to have lunch here

13.30 hrs: Thiepval Memorial and Visitor’s centre; watch film.

14.30 hrs: Lochnagar Crater (walking up hill to 1 July 34 Div objective if time allows)

15.30 hrs: Delville Wood – includes toilet stop.

16.30 hrs: Head back to The Old Abbey (Ypres)

18.30 hrs: Evening Meal

19.30 hrs:  Military Artefacts (uniform, webbing, field-dressing, Lee Enfield, bayonet, Brodie helmet, boots etc) presented by the Guide.

Monday 17th July:  Ypres

08.30 hrs departure to Ypres

09.00 hrs: Lijssenthoek cemetery outside Poperinge; Here we talk about medical care and nurses contribution and Nurse Nellie Spindler; Then as we drive towards Ypres stop at Brandhoek cemetery to look at double VC winner Captain Noel Chavasse.

10.15 hrs: Tyne Cott

11.30 hrs: Passchendale Memorial Museum at Zonnebeke Watch Passchendale film together (toilets here)

 Lunch break in grounds

13.15 hrs: Langemarck German Cemetery

14.00 hrs:  Sanctuary Wood

17.00 hrs:  Park along moat: Walk into Ypres through Menin Gate (5 mins talk about gate and ceremony)

17.30 hrs: Leonidas Chocolate shop (guide will arrange)

18.00 hrs Meal (Den Anker - Ypres)

19.20 hrs; Report to Menin Gate

20.00 hrs Menin Gate Act of Homage (guide will arrange school participation)

20.30 hrs Return to The Old Abbey

Tuesday 18th July

08.30 hrs Load coach and depart for Bruges. Guide to leave group here

10.00 hrs: Group to have free time in Bruges

14.00 hrs: Calais check-in

23.00 hrs: arrive back at school

**Anticipated numbers of students/staff involved:**

It is anticipated there will be 60 students from *current* Year 9 involved in the visit. There will be a staffing ratio of 1:10 students, so 6 members of staff. A seventh member has been necessary in the past to support students with physical disabilities.

Based on previous years, it is likely there will be around 10 (roughly 17% of the cohort) Disadvantaged students who will access the trip and around 25-30% of the students are likely to be from an Ethnic Minority background. If more than 60 students show interest in the trip students will be selected at random, using a fair selection process.

**Promotion of the visit:**

The trip will be promoted via the screens around school and a short message delivered by form tutors. In addition, the trip will be promoted on the Battlefields Trip’s dedicated Twitter account, @RHSBattlefields23

**Anticipated Timeline of Events:**

March 2022 – Publicise the trip and confirm student places and collect initial deposit

September 2022 – Second deposit taken and request for any relative details to be given to school by parents, so we can see if our itinerary allows us to visit their grave/memorial.

January 2023 – Medical forms, code of conduct and insurance detail sent to parents.

March 2023 – Final payment received from students

June 2023 final itinerary confirmed/hoodies arrived/ Battlefields Trip parents evening to give parents more information and the opportunity to ask any questions.

July 2023 – Battlefield’s trip departs

**Links to the Curriculum:**

The trip will enhance the provision of personal development, SMSC and help to promote the fundamental British Values through:

* Enabling students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through being taken out of their comfort zone, many being away from home for the first time.
* Developing valuable understanding of cultural and moral reasons for remembering the war and allow students to develop a historical and geographical understanding of how and why the war was fought.
* Encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those within the school community by supporting others through an emotional and educational visit.
* Allow students to develop further tolerance and understanding of different cultures and traditions through acquiring an appreciation of and respect for another culture by visiting a foreign country;
* Encouraging respect for other people, from their peers, to their teachers, the guide, hotel staff and museum representatives.

**Information about our destinations:**

The Somme, in northern France, was the area that saw the most British casualties in France. The battle began in July 1917 in order to provide relief for the French at Verdun and continued until November. The fighting was so fierce there were over 57,000 British casualties and 20,000 deaths on the first day alone. The area today is mostly farmland, however it is littered with cemeteries and memorials, some of which make up our itinerary on our second day. This includes the biggest memorial to the missing at Thiepval, Lochnagar mine creator and Mill Road cemetery, the home to the graves of some of our very own Rastrick Old Boys.

Ypres, in southern Belgium, was held by the British for the duration of the war. The British saw it as imperative that they held the ground to continue to support Belgium, without who they would never have joined the war in the first place. Over 275,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers lost their lives in this salient in the perilous mud with a constant German threat. Here, students will see the largest British cemetery at Tyne Cot, visit reconditioned and restored trenches and have the opportunity to see artefacts and try out trench life at the Passchendaele Museum.

**Details of the hotel:**

In 2023 we will be using a new hotel, The Old Abbey in Ypres. It is central as there will only be a one-and-a-half-hour commute to the Somme and half an hour to the sites in Ypres. Room numbers have not been confirmed, but tend to be for 4 students, each with an en-suite bathroom. Bedroom doors can be locked so student’s valuables can be left throughout the day. Staff rooms are interspersed between student’s rooms for added security. Breakfast throughout our stay and the evening meal for our first two nights will be provided by the hotel. These are often canteen style and cater for students with various dietary needs. Although the hotel is new, we have been using NST as our travel provider for the Battlefields trip for over 15 years and we have generally found that accommodations standards are high.

**Summary Comments:**

For the most part our itinerary remains the same each year. The trip leader has been organising this trip for 14 years and the second on the trip has accompanied the school for each of these 14 years. There are also two very experienced staff who participate in the trip each year and are familiar with all protocols and requirements. Our aim is to provide our students with an inimitable insight into the events of the First World War which will allow them to understand the sheer scale and sacrifice involved through an experience they will never forget.