

## IPUP World War One - Phone App Content

### **Entry Page**

Experiencing the Great War: York in World War One

Welcome to the York in World War One walking Trail, I'm Jonathan Cowap and I'll be your guide. The trail begins within the Museum Gardens in front of the steps to the Yorkshire Museum.

On this trail you will discover the hidden story of York's Great War and learn about how this global conflict affected local lives.

### **Stop One**

**Soldiers on every street corner: the war is announced in York**  
Yorkshire Museum

*Stand in front of the Yorkshire Museum, on the steps looking out into the Gardens.*

As we stand here in the grounds of the Yorkshire Museum we recall the outbreak of war which was announced to the residents of York on 5th August 1914, outside the offices of the Yorkshire Herald Newspaper Building on Coney Street. You can stop by the old Herald building [now home to the City Screen Picturehouse] between stops 4 and 5 of the walk.

Upon the announcement of war there were “loud and prolonged cheers...and the National Anthem was heartily sung”. The city sprang into action immediately: the York Press reported on the same day that “everywhere today one saw soldiers in uniform about the city. They were to be met with at every street corner”. Around the country as a whole the news of war took the nation by surprise and so was greeted by both anxiety and enthusiasm.

It appears that the local press hadn't done enough to prepare York's inhabitants for Britain entering the war, as the Yorkshire Evening Press stated, soon after war had been announced, “the normal man cared more about the activities of the household cat than about events abroad.”

## **Stop Two**

### **“York's Roll of Honour”: Recruitment, Railways & the Requisition of Public Buildings**

York Art Gallery

*The location for this stop is in front of the Art Gallery. Once there, stand near the statue of William Etty so that you are facing the Art Gallery and listen to the ways in which this building was used during the war. If you are visiting this stop during gallery opening times, you should then make your way to the Burton Gallery on the first floor and stand in front of the painting by Richard Jack, titled ‘Return to the Front – Victoria Station’.*

Following the announcement of war, the Exhibition Buildings (now the York Art Gallery) were requisitioned as a military headquarters and specifically as a recruitment centre. Men from all over the city made their way here to enlist. Headlines in the Yorkshire Gazette, like 'YORK'S ROLL OF HONOUR', and 'YORK HAS SENT HER THOUSANDS TO WAR' were printed weekly, with lists of names and the photographs of serving York men.

As well as a recruitment centre the Central Hall of the Exhibition Buildings (now the main exhibition space of the gallery) was requisitioned by the military as a post office and subsequently became the city's point of access to the world. Thousands of letters, food parcels and other correspondence, to and from loved ones, were sent to the front in France and Belgium from this building, as well as further afield to every corner of the Empire.

The importance of keeping in touch with those back home and for lifting morale was crucial, a wonderful example of this can be seen if you scroll down the app and view the image of a card beautifully decorated with the words 'Far from you but thinking of you'.

The Exhibition Buildings were the only sites large enough to accommodate the traffic of letters and parcels during the war. At times the number of letters a soldier could send were restricted to just a couple per week; one York soldier complained that this

not only limits contact with loved ones, but also hampers the important business correspondence in which many were engaging to support their families at home. This is a reminder that many of the soldiers fighting abroad were still trying to manage their working lives and support their families back home in Britain.

On the first floor of York Art Gallery, there is a painting by war artist Richard Jack titled 'Return to the Front', depicting a scene in which soldiers are preparing to board a train at London's Victoria Station. York's own railways played a crucial role in the transportation of troops, munitions, food and other resources such as horses and mail. The sheer volume of military traffic that passed through York demanded the opening of a new canteen in November 1915. Positioned on platform three, the soldiers and sailors refreshment facility was staffed around the clock by volunteers from the local Women's Temperance Association, so that even servicemen travelling by night could be given a cup of tea when they arrived. In addition, nearly 5,000 employees of the North Eastern Railway company enlisted with many York women filling the posts they had vacated.

### **Stop Three**

#### **Conkers and Couriers: York Children in the First World War.**

## Evelyn and Crabtree Building, St Helen's Square

*Stop in front of St Helen's Church, and look at the next-door building, right on the corner of Stonegate.*

During the war, the building to the left of St. Helen's Church (now Crabtree and Evelyn) was a toyshop called Holgate and Sons. When trading with Germany was banned, Britain began producing its own toys, creating a boom in the domestic industry. Although far from the front, York's young citizens felt the impact of the war. School life was thrown into upheaval as groups of children were transferred across the city, whilst teachers were encouraged to enlist and school nurses moved to field hospitals. Seven schools were temporarily taken over by the armed forces for use as billeting posts and others were continually requisitioned for other purposes.

Now you might consider collecting and playing with conkers a harmless childhood activity but during the First World War, collecting conkers was not thought of as a game but a serious task, vital to the war effort. In 1917, War Office notices appeared in classrooms and scout huts offering a 7s 6d reward for every 100 weight collected by children, that's about 38p. These conkers were transported by train to chemical factories in the south of England and then used to make acetone, a vital component in *cordite*, the smokeless propellant used for shells and bullets.

Before the war cordite had been imported from North America and this source was now being threatened as a result of the German U-Boat blockade in the Atlantic.

Conker collection was just one task expected of children; York Boy Scouts also delivered messages for the War Office across the city and in July 1915, helped shorthanded local farmers **collect** **gather in** their harvest. Military Sunday was another opportunity for children to show support for their parents, this time in a public setting. And in York Scouts marched **through** St Helen's Square and up Stonegate towards the Minster. They were dressed in full uniform with flags raised and trumpets playing.

## **Stop Four**

### **Cowardice or Courage? York's Conscientious Objectors**

The Guildhall

*Walk towards The Mansion House, the large red building at the end of the square. Walk beneath the Mansion House, through the archway, to reach the Guildhall.*

Although many of York's men enlisted, others chose to take a non-violent stance. York Guildhall served as a local tribunal in the War, and was the place where Conscientious Objectors could come and plead their case. The tribunal would then decide whether they could be exempted. A total of just 14 people from York were given

a full exemption. The majority of these men in the city were Quakers who were well known for their stance against violence. York man Alfred Martlew was one of a group of Conscientious Objectors nicknamed the 'Richmond 16', imprisoned at Richmond Castle for refusing to support the conflict in any way. The opinion of the people in York towards them was varied. One letter to the Yorkshire Herald in 1916 said that all Conscientious Objectors should be branded with an 'X' on their forehead. However, others fought for people's right to object, sometimes even offering them work of national importance.

## **Stop Five**

### **Broken Bodies, Muddled Minds: York's War Hospitals**

Quaker Meeting House, Friargate

*Walking down Castlegate, turn right into Friargate and look for the Quaker Meeting House at the white-painted porch.*

York's hospitals soon found themselves struggling to cope with the influx of casualties returning from the Western Front. The building here, behind the Quaker Meeting House, just off Clifford St, was the site of one of a number of auxiliary Voluntary Aid Detachment hospitals which were established in York's public buildings to ease the shortage. The dining block of the Rowntree's Chocolate Factory was another such example. Known as the

Haxby Road Military Hospital, it offered 200 beds and emergency care for the war-wounded.

Elsewhere in the city, treatment was offered to those men suffering from psychological illnesses associated with the war. Naburn Hospital (then known as York City Asylum), Clifton Hospital, Bootham Hospital and The Retreat cared for a number of patients diagnosed with 'shell-shock', many of whom remained there for years after the war had ended. One case study from Bootham Hospital tells of a young officer in the Royal Air Force, who was left unconscious for three weeks after his plane crashed during a raid over London. Once discharged, he was given leave, during which time he got married. Not only, however, did he not remember the marriage ceremony or the church, but he did not marry the girl to whom he was already engaged. He also recollected having many strange ideas, including the conviction that he was a cuckoo or a cow. He was finally re-admitted to the hospital, "intensely confused and emotional, with complete loss of memory".

## **Stop Six**

### **Internment of POWs & 'Enemy Aliens': York Castle Prison and Leeman Road Concentration Camp**

Castle Green



*After walking past Clifford's Tower towards the Castle Museum, stand by the tree in the centre of the grass.*

With the outbreak of war came a creeping tide of anti-German sentiment across the UK. German employees lost their jobs and German shops were attacked. This hostility towards people or businesses that had links to German heritage or families spread to York. The city became famous as a detention centre for local German civilians who were arrested and imprisoned at the Castle Prison which is now the York Castle Museum. As a wave of paranoid 'spy fever' swept the country, by September 1914, where you are now standing was the site of a tented encampment holding the overflow of so-called 'enemy aliens'. There was a similar encampment built on Leeman Road.

The animosity towards people of German extraction got to such a point that even individuals with foreign-sounding names appear to have been victimised. For instance, W. Kitching of Holgate Road felt it necessary to write to the city papers to insist that he owned no airship or aeroplane with which to assist the enemy. The next month, Joseph Foster Mandefield, of French extraction and a hosier of 12a Monkgate, wrote to the papers to protest against unfounded rumours that he had been arrested for attempting to poison the city's reservoir.

## **Stop Seven**

## **Life on the Home Front: York's War Horses & Walmgate in the War**

Merchantgate

*Cross Piccadilly by the Red Lion pub and look for the painted sign advertising F.R. Stubbs' Ironmongers.*

You are now standing at the junction of Walmgate and Merchantgate. During the time of The Great War, Walmgate and the immediate area was one of the city's worst slum districts. Unfortunately local funds were largely directed away from improvements in sanitation and housing and towards the war effort, worsening the effects of poverty in York. Plans for new housing, a Tuberculosis Hospital and an extension to the Fever Hospital were postponed.

At the outbreak of war the Military Authorities in York commandeered the Barbican Road Cattle Market (once sited at the end of Walmgate) as a depot for requisitioned horses. The following day, York residents witnessed mounted yeomanry arrive in the city who begin commandeering horses indiscriminately. One account of this was recorded by the *Yorkshire Evening Press*; a farming convoy moving along Blossom Street, it reported, was stopped by the military **stopped them**, given a small payment and the horses that had been driving the

carts taken away. The legacy of the war horse story and the half million animals that never returned from the front can still be felt in the number of heavy draught horses that are now classed as rare and semi-rare breeds.

Walmgate is also notable for the remarkable story of the Calpin family, which received local acclaim when ten brothers all enlisted in 1914. Press articles praised the patriotism of the brothers, and the Lord Mayor, Henry Rhodes Brown, wrote a letter to the brothers' parents stating that "it will be hard for anyone in the Empire to equal your fine record of ten sons all serving their country." All ten survived the war and returned home, although one son, Joseph, would die a few weeks later from gas poisoning.

The effects of such chemical attacks were not confined to the soldiers. The proximity of horses to the same dangers as the men meant that both man and beast had to be equipped with gas masks. A picture of a horse's gas mask from The Great War can be seen if you scroll down on your screen and the actual artefact is held in the York Castle Museum collection.

## **Stop 8**

### **Confectionary & Hospitality: The Rowntree's Story**

35 Pavement Street **(Pizza Hut)**

*Cross Pavement and walk towards the entrance to the Shambles, entering the yard in front of the church of St. Crux. Look back across the road towards the building at number 35, now housing a Pizza Hut.*

The building now occupied by Pizza Hut is the site of York businessman and philanthropist Joseph Rowntree's first grocers' shop, which opened in 1842. It was here that Arnold Rowntree, a fierce champion of the rights of conscientious objectors and the Liberal MP for York between 1910 and 1918, lived as an apprentice in his uncle's shop. During the war, Arnold had made his opposition to conscription clear and later campaigned for the release of the 'Richmond 16', one of whom was Alfred Martlew, a clerk who had worked at the Rowntree's factory.

The Rowntrees Company was contracted by the government to supply goods to the army, but in addition, members of Rowntree's workforce sent out their own packages to the troops. The Cocoa Works employees' magazine tells us how a Miss Huffam was particularly instrumental in this, requesting donations of "tobacco, cigarettes, matches, candles, chocolates, peppermints, etc." to send in her weekly parcels to the men of the West Yorkshire Regiment, while the workers of the Almond Paste Department also sent parcels of "confectionery and cigarettes" to

their departmental colleagues in the forces.

This generosity wasn't just felt overseas. Rowntree's also displayed their hospitality here in York. The Haxby Road factory which the company still occupy today was offered up during the war initially as a station for the West Yorkshire Regiment Territorial Army and later, as a military hospital.

As well as accommodating soldiers waiting to travel to the frontline, Rowntree's played host to those travelling in the opposite direction: Belgian refugees who were fleeing from the fighting. Many found their way to New Earswick, Rowntree's model village for their employees, where nine houses were donated rent-free by the directors. Rowntree's workers helped furnish and decorate these homes for the refugees and also paid a weekly donation of 1d to support the Belgian families. In turn, the refugees contributed to the community: many of the men took jobs in the Cocoa Works in order to support their families themselves, while some also offered to teach French to the employees.

Hundreds of Rowntree's male employees went off to fight in the war; many of them did not return. In 1921, the company gave Rowntree Park to the city in memory of all those workers lost in the war.

If you scroll down on your screen you can see an image of some Rowntree's confectionary which survived the trenches. Its inscription reads "The Lord Mayor of York John Bowes Morrell and The Sheriff Oscar F Rowntree send best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a bright New Year to all York men who are serving their King and Country. Christmas 1914." The item itself is in the collection at York Castle Museum.

## **Stop Nine**

### **Dark Shadows in the Skies of York: The Zeppelin Raids, 1916**

School Yard Gallery Gardens, Peasholme Green

*Walk along Peasholme Green to the Black Swan Pub. Cross the road and look for the entrance to The New School House Gallery, where you'll find a garden and benches to sit on.*

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1916, the skies of York darkened with the distinctive shadow of a Zeppelin airship. There were numerous Zeppelin airship attacks on the north of England during the war, and York was the target on three occasions. The first airship dropped sixteen bombs as it moved above Nunthorpe Lane and continued towards the city centre, causing damage to Upper Price Street, Caroline Street and Peasholme Green. That raid saw nine people killed, twenty seven injured and damage to many homes and buildings. Some bombs landed in this area, not far from where

you are, in Peasholme Green, and resulted in the most casualties with six people killed and one injured. When it passed over Nunthorpe Avenue a local man reported, "it dropped a bomb which blew off a lady's arm, killed one of her daughters outright and injured another daughter in the spine". After this attack the city prepared itself for further assaults which helped defend it from two subsequent raids in September and November.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September 1916, eight airships left their North German sheds to raid England once again. L-14, commanded by Hauptmann von Manger, headed towards York. However, the German aircrew were caught by surprise when they encountered the city's newly prepared defences. The powerful anti-aircraft gun and searchlight at Acomb picked out the Zeppelin as it flew across the city. After performing a number of manoeuvres to try and avoid the ceaseless firing of the gun, the airship managed to continue its course dropping bombs to the east of the city centre. The most serious damage of the raid was caused by a bomb falling close to the Holy Trinity church in Heworth. All the windows in the church including a stained glass memorial were smashed. The bomb did not directly cause any physical injuries although one woman did subsequently die of shock.

The final Zeppelin attack was on the 27<sup>th</sup> November. Lights which would have provided the Zeppelin a valuable guide were quickly

extinguished by the police and the city was thrust into darkness. In its swift retreat from the city's anti-aircraft fire, the Zeppelin dropped twelve bombs on Haxby Road, Fountayne Street and Wigginton road. On this occasion the attack resulted in just one single injury.

George Benson wrote that the November raid on the city 'provided the citizens with a thrilling spectacle and enthusiasm ran high when the marksmen proved the victors'. This triumphant atmosphere gave the citizens of York a brief respite from the countless stories of loss and bereavement from the Western Front. York's resistance to the Zeppelin attacks united the people of the city and established a new belief that Britain could end this war victorious.

## **Stop Ten**

### **Armistice and Aftermaths – Dean's Park**

*After walking alongside the Minster, continue across the grass of Dean's Park towards the war memorial: a series of stone arches set in front of the trees.*

You are now standing in front of the Dean's Park War Memorial. Look across toward the Minster and you will see the location



where some 10,000 citizens attended a thanksgiving service on the evening that the armistice was announced.

At the announcement of the War's end in 1918, the Minster's bells rang out for the first time in five long years. Bugles sounded, cheering crowds gathered and the union jack was raised all over the city.

It was a day for indulgence and festivities, but was also a day tinged with sadness. The gathered crowds remembered those who would not be returning from the front lines; those whose sacrifice had made the day possible. One reporter recalled that "the sight of women with tear-dimmed eyes but with smiles lighting up their countenance filled one with strange emotion". It was a melancholy happiness, both of pride and grief.

Hundreds of thousands men had been killed in the fighting, many leaving behind wives, children and other family members with no source of income. Others returned bearing the physical and psychological scars of the war. Thomas Abbott, a resident of Walmgate, recalled war-disabled soldiers on his street: "You saw men in a terrible state. They just existed in lodging houses. Some had no legs, just stumps, leather aprons on the end so they could shuffle along. These men used were gradually fading away, dying off in the lodging-houses, nobody could care less".

Soon after the war ended, York residents established a branch of the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors. This pressure group was founded to lobby the government on key issues such as disability pensions, medical provisions and employment opportunities for former servicemen. For years afterwards Naburn, Clifton and Bootham Hospitals, and the Quaker-run Retreat continued to treat patients suffering from war neuroses. It was clear that the long path to recovery was only just beginning.