

Pathways to the Past

The newsletter of Connelly Contours Limited

Number 1: October-November 2024



On your Marks...

A very warm welcome to the first Connelly Contours newsletter!

Connelly Contours exists to show you the lingering imprint of history on landscape and place, and how you can discover pathways to the past.

I am passionate about sharing my excitement of encountering the past in the present, and making history accessible and engaging for everyone.

See my website for more information about small group bespoke battlefield guiding, London walks, family war service research, and talks and commemorative events.

Like this one, future newsletters will include features about a particular cemetery or memorial on the Western Front as well as a London building or landmark. Let me know which places you'd like to see featured in future editions.

And if you're interested in visiting any of these places with me as your guide, or booking a talk about them please do get in touch.

Mark



Inside

Western Front

The Alpha and the Omega: St. Symphorien Military Cemetery

Forthcoming London walks

London

The Royal Artillery memorial

The 11th of November

Contact

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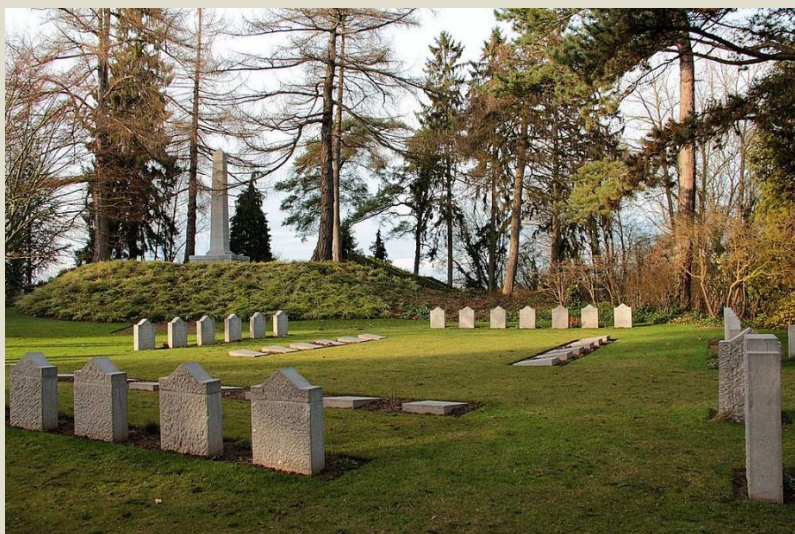
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Western Front



St. Symphorien Military Cemetery



The St. Symphorien Military Cemetery at Mons in Belgium is the alpha and omega of British cemeteries on the Western Front, as this place of 513 burials contains the graves of both the first and the last casualties of the British and Imperial forces in the First World War.

Private John Parr, 4th battalion Middlesex Regiment, was killed on 21 August 1914 by German infantry advancing in the opening exchanges of what became the battle of Mons. Cast a glance across the grass pathway in front of Parr's grave and you will see the burial place of the last British casualty, Private George Ellison of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, killed on 11 November 1918 at 9.30am, just ninety minutes before the armistice came into effect.

The very last soldier of the British and Imperial forces to be killed is also buried close by. Agonisingly, Private George Price of the 28th battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force was killed at 10.58am. Two minutes later the guns fell silent in France and Belgium...

[Click here to read the full article on my website to find out more about this poignant site.](#)

Forthcoming London walks

'Bah! Humbug' A Christmas Carol



22 Nov
23 Nov
6 Dec
7 Dec
20 Dec

An Introduction to London's war memorials



26 Oct
1 Nov
9 Nov
23 Nov

London's First World War memorials



24 Oct
2 Nov
9 Nov
11 Nov

Upstairs, Downstairs: The squares, shops and spooks of London's West End



25 Oct
26 Oct
2 Nov
7 Nov

All walks are 2-2.5 hours and cost £25 per person

[Click here to find out more and book](#)

The 11th of November



On 11 November 1918 the guns of the First World War finally ceased firing. Four years earlier, 11 November was significant for a different reason. On this day in 1914 the Germans launched their last great attempt to achieve a breakthrough in the west and bring their initial war plan to its successful culmination...

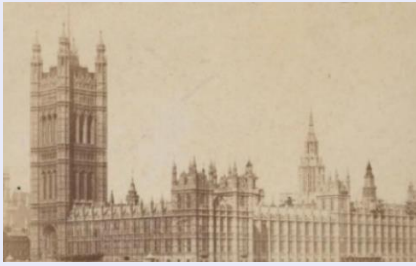
[Click here to read the full article on my website and find out more about this significant date.](#)



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London



The Royal Artillery memorial



The Royal Artillery memorial at Hyde Park Corner was unveiled on 18 October 1925 and is not only the finest British unit memorial of both world wars, but one of the finest war memorials ever created. Few fail to notice it or can resist engaging with it.

During the course of the Great War the Royal Regiment of Artillery suffered nearly 50,000 casualties. Reflecting its corps motto, *ubique* (everywhere), it served in every theatre of war, on every battlefield and with an immense range of weapons. Given these experiences and its status as an ancient corps with a distinct sense of its own dignity and prowess, it was little wonder that a Royal Artillery War Commemoration Fund was established in 1918. Its members were very clear on the desired form: they wanted an artillery piece and the role of the artillery reflected fully in the design. This was going to be a memorial commissioned by gunners for gunners, not a memorial to comfort bereaved family members and friends. It was a distinction some misunderstood at the time, and which has never been dispelled entirely...

[Click here to read the full article on my website to find out more about this unique memorial.](#)