

Pathways to the Past

The newsletter of Connelly Contours Limited

Number 5: June - July 2025



On your Marks...

Summer is here. We have wonderful long days and the prospect of glorious weather.

Living in Kent, as I do, this season also makes me aware of the Channel and brings to mind the evacuation of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain summer that followed. To mark this, I have launched a new battlefield tour, *Spitfires, Soldiers and Sands: defending the Kent coast*. This is a battlefield tour that can be done in a day and without leaving the country! Do have a look at [the details on the website](#).

There's also a new London walk, *Refugees and reformers: Huguenot Spitalfields and Jewish Whitechapel*, which takes in the fascinating history of that small patch of the capital right on the City's eastern fringe. On this walk you'll see a shopping arcade that looks like a Moorish bazaar, one of London's finest churches, and places where hard work, inspiration and endeavour dragged people out of the pit of poverty.

Inside this newsletter you'll find out about Klein Vierstraat British Cemetery, and one of London's greatest pieces of architectural sculpture, Gilbert Bayes's frieze on the Saville Theatre, Shaftesbury Lane.

Why not come with me and see some of these amazing places.

Mark



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Western Front



Gargoyles and a spiral staircase: the simple wonders of Klein Vierstraat British Cemetery



Klein Vierstraat is a cemetery typical of the IWGC's approach to design, typical of its mix of uniform and individual hallmarks; a perfect example of the Commission's founding principles. On the larger side of modest, it contains 805 graves, this cemetery nestles into the landscape about four miles south-west of Ieper, Belgium, near the corner of Molenstraat and Vierstraat.

L-shaped in form, with the upstroke much broader than the base stroke, the main axis of the cemetery runs from the entrance to the Cross of Sacrifice. This creates a stunning panoramic main view; the first of the cemetery's effects. There's the village of Dikkebus tucked in its fold over to the right, there's that of De Klijte up on the rise to the half-left, and twist a little further round the green of Kemmel hill stands out like a forested walnut whip plonked down on the patchwork tablecloth of Flemish fields...

[Click here to read the full article on my website.](#)

Forthcoming London walks

Wednesday 11 June

10.30am Upstairs, Downstairs: The squares, shops and spooks of London's West End

2pm Railway stations and passengers: King's Cross to Paddington

Thursday 19 June

10.30am Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys

2pm Spires and towers: the churches of the City of London

Friday 20 June

10.30am London's First World War memorials

2pm Upstairs, Downstairs: The squares, shops and spooks of London's West End

Saturday 21 June

10.30am Railway stations and passengers: King's Cross to Paddington

2pm London's First World War memorials

Saturday 28 June

10.30am Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys

2pm Spires and towers: the churches of the City of London

Friday 4 July

2pm: Refugees and Reformers. Huguenot Spitalfields and Jewish Whitechapel

Continued over.../

London



All the world's a stage: Gilbert Bayes and the Saville Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue



My parents were great cinema goers. They were of the generation that went to the pictures religiously; they were prepared to give almost any film a go and they very much inculcated that culture into me and my brother. Among my parents' cinema-going tenets was that 'big films' should be seen in the first run cinemas of the West End. As a London cabbie, my dad kept a close eye on the releases and the cinemas scheduled to exhibit them. One of my favourite cinemas was the Odeon, Shaftesbury Avenue... it is the frieze which continues to enchant, delight and spark wonder in me. For here, Gilbert Bayes executed one of the finest pieces of architectural sculpture in the whole country.

Running from left to right (or west to east) in bas relief is the history of European theatre, and it is utterly amazing. Between the left corner and the great arched window topping the main entrance there are scenes depicting the medieval Chester Mystery plays. Move to the other side of the window and the frieze continues with the Greek chorus, then Roman Gladiators, which includes two men restraining lions on leashes. On and on it goes, with so many wonderful details: a Punch and Judy cabinet fronted by a dog in a ruff...

[Click here to read the full article on my website.](#)

Saturday 5 July

10.30am Upstairs, Downstairs: The squares, shops and spooks of London's West End

Thursday 24 July

10.30am Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys

2pm: Refugees and Reformers. Huguenot Spitalfields and Jewish Whitechapel

All walks are 2.5 hours and cost £25 per person

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

5 July 1940

Whenever I think of July 1940, I see the box lid of an Airfix Spitfire or Hurricane ... The space was the English Channel coast somewhere between Beachy Head and the North Foreland near Dover. It meant chalky white cliffs topped with lush green, neatly hedged meadows. It meant a powder blue sky, with wisps of cotton wool clouds above a gently swaying blue-green sea...

[Click here to read the full article on my website.](#)



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