

# Pathways to the Past

The newsletter of Connelly Contours Limited

Number 4: April - May 2025

---



## On your Marks...

Spring has arrived, the buds are transforming into flowers, shadows are getting stronger in the sunlight, and the length of the days tells us we're edging towards summer.

It has been huge fun doing the walks, and I am delighted to see repeat strollers. I'm beginning to think that I should institute a badge for those who complete the set! And as those regulars now know, an important part of the walks is getting into good voice, as we have short readings from a range of historical sources at selected sites. We've all really enjoyed the combination of looking at a building or memorial and then immersing ourselves even deeper into the past by hearing snippets from diaries, letters, and newspapers.

May sees the launch of a new walk – Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys – which winds across Fleet Street in the footsteps of people like Dr Johnson, as well as a parrot famous for her swearing!

And May is also a great time to see the battlefields, as the cemeteries burst into flower. The new life and the riot of colour contrast poignantly with the pale Portland of the headstones commemorating the death of so many.

Let's go walking together.

*Mark*



## Inside

—  
*Western Front*

Cabaret Rouge: the great garden of the dead

Forthcoming London walks

*London*

City wanderings: Fleet Street's courts and alleys

22 April 1915

## Contact

—  
Mark Connelly  
[mark@connellycontours.co.uk](mailto:mark@connellycontours.co.uk)  
+44 (0)7865 816441  
[connellycontours.co.uk](http://connellycontours.co.uk)

## Western Front



## Cabaret Rouge: the great garden of the dead



Cabaret Rouge is a cemetery regular visitors to the battlefield know well. Although perhaps a tiny bit off some of the usual tracks, its scale (7661 graves) and beauty draw people towards it.

As the Commission's website tells, the cemetery was commenced in March 1916 and gained its name from the café next door with its distinctive red bricks and tiles. The real expansion of the site came with the end of the war when over 7000 graves were concentrated from more than 100 small cemeteries. In concentration cemeteries it is usually easy to find the original plot(s) which often lack the uniformity of those systematically created through the activity of post-war battlefield clearance work. Cabaret Rouge is no exception, and the first burials can be found at Plots I-IV.

To contemplate the sweep and form of the cemetery from this position shows just how carefully the expansion was planned and developed...

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

## Forthcoming London walks

### Saturday 12 April

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

2.30pm Railway stations and passengers: King's Cross to Paddington

### Sunday 13 April

10.30am Spires and towers: the churches of the City of London

2.30pm Upstairs, Downstairs: The squares, shops and spooks of London's West End

### Friday 25 April

2pm London's First World War memorials

### Saturday 26 April

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

2.30pm Railway stations and passengers: King's Cross to Paddington

### Friday 9 May

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

### Saturday 10 May

10.00am Spires and towers: the churches of the City of London

2pm Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys

### Thursday 22 May

2pm London's First World War memorials

Continued over.../

## London



### City wanderings: Fleet Street's courts and alleys



One of the greatest pleasures that can be had in London is to wander among its courts and alleys. Considering the effects of bombing in the Second World War and the almost incessant waves of redevelopment, it is surprising just how many survive. To delve into these narrow passages is to be transported back in time as the modern city is left behind within a few footsteps.

My favourite cluster remains those I first explored as a teenager just off Fleet Street starting at Wine Office Court. All the romance of the square mile's history was, and still is, summed-up in that name. It first appears in a map of 1676 and was labelled after the office which issued licences for the purchase of wine. Immediately on seeing the sign, I can sense the rich odours of port and oak barrels in my nostrils. I can hear the scribble of quill pens on parchment and the click of Dr Samuel Johnson's stick on the cobbles.

At its junction with Fleet Street for about thirty metres Wine Office Court is a completely covered passageway before opening-up. As if to compensate for the glimpses of the sky that are now possible, the passage narrows so that the view can only be achieved by craning the neck and looking directly upwards. And it is at this point that the sign of 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese' ...

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

## Friday 23 May

10.00am Spires and towers: the churches of the City of London

2pm Writers, printers and protestors: the City's courtyards and alleys

All walks are 2.5 hours and cost £25 per person

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

## 22 April 1915

In the small village of St Juliaan, just a few miles north of Ieper, there is a monument that has entranced visitors since it was unveiled on 8 July 1923. Designed by Frederick Chapman Clemesha, it commemorates the Canadian soldiers who fought and fell while repulsing the opening German assaults in the Second Battle of Ypres. As the British official history of the war points out, 'the 22<sup>nd</sup> April was a glorious spring day', but many soldiers failed to see the sun that morning as a green-yellow cloud of chlorine gas enveloped them. It was the first use of gas on the Western Front: another horrific weapon had been added to the Great War's arsenal of killing technologies...

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



Company No. 15189859  
Registered address: 2 The Grove,  
Barham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 6PP

© Connelly Contours Limited, 2025