



Friday June 10th 2011

World War One Battlefields Trip

Dear Parents,

We are writing to you with details of the History department's First World War battlefields study trip. We have run this trip in a slightly different form for many years and with much success; students return from the trip with a much better understanding of the events of the First World War, but are also struck by the emotional experience. Indeed, what makes the trip so special is the number of students who have personal connections to soldiers of the First World War. Moreover, thanks to the research of Mr Storrie, we also trace the lives and heroism of many of St George's luminaries: Monk and Goddard among them. This trip is about trying to grasp the scale of the war, not only through a better knowledge of what happened, but also with a greater appreciation of the sense of sacrifice that people gave. It is our hope that it affects students profoundly. Historically, students have had the memorable experience of taking part in the Menin Gate ceremony, have traced their own family members, and have read out excerpts from poems, diaries and letters at the graves and battlefields of many soldiers. On the last evening, all the students will take part in a Poetry Evening, a fitting way to try and come to terms with the enormity of all they have seen.

The trip will run from the **Thursday 9th February to Sunday 12th February 2012** leaving at lunch-time on the Thursday and returning on the early evening of the Sunday, this being the start of the February half-term. We will travel by Executive, Air-Conditioned coach and Ferry. We are running this as a non- curriculum trip and so are opening interest to all students in Year 11. We are also very fortunate to be able to call on some excellent staff with vast experience of battlefield tours including Mr Simon and Mr Cousins.

On the Thursday evening we will be based in the French town of Albert staying in the Somme School Hotel, specifically designed for school visits. The hotel has en-suite bathroom facilities, a games room, computer suites and a large dining area. We will travel up to the Ypres region of Belgium and stay in the Salient School Hotel, which is run by the same family firm as the hotel in Albert. The trip is run on a full-board basis, and students have the privilege of dining out in the evening in Ypres' restaurants. Students will also have the opportunity to have some free time around this beautifully restored Belgian city.

Our studies of the First World War will range from the Somme in Northern France to the infamous battlefields around the city of Ypres. The enormity of loss at The Battle of the Somme will be conveyed through the tragic story of the tiny community of Newfoundlanders, at Newfoundland Park and the poignancy of the decimation of the Devonshires. Students will also be able to grasp the nature of trench warfare – reconstructed trenches at Yorkshire trench, Bayernwald and dugouts at the Paschedaele Museum at Zonnebeke help them to visualise the difficulty for commanders of taking any gains.

The scale of loss is powerfully brought home to students at the Commonwealth cemeteries and memorials at Tyne Cott, Thiepval and Menin Gate, as well as the distinctive and eerie German cemetery at Langemarck. There is a strong collective memory in the popular imagination of our

country about the First World War. Students will come back from this trip with a stronger sense of what really happened and have begun to form their own recollections of the lives and heroism of the soldiers who fought and died for their country.

The total of the trip is likely to cost £249. The price includes travel, full board accommodation, educational resources - including a copy of Mr Storrie's book on war dead of St George's School - a 'hoodie' and insurance. Should your child be interested in this trip, we would require a non-refundable deposit of £50, along with the accompanying slip to be sent to the Finance Office by **0900 Friday 24th June**. If you feel your family would qualify for support from the Harpenden or Redbourn Trust due to low income, you need to contact Mr Storrie before this date.

Our preferred method of payment is via our ParentPay on-line system. If you do not have your login details and have not used this system before, please contact the finance office who will be happy to help you. They can be reached on 01582 765477 or via e-mail at finance@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk. Alternatively, payments can be made in the form of a cheque payable to St. George's School, which should be taken to the finance office, which is in the school office to the right of main reception. We would then require further instalments of £100 and £99 by 15th of October and 15th of December respectively.

As we are planning to take a single coach, and there is limited availability of accommodation, there will be only 42 student places available for this trip. We recognise many students are already taking part in the Berlin GCSE History trip which *is* a curriculum trip and a significant financial commitment. It should be stressed that there is no expectation from us that GCSE History students should attend this trip, the purpose of which lies mainly in the personal and emotional development people draw from it.

However, we feel strongly that students who have shown an interest in history in opting to study it for GCSE should have first opportunity to take part. Therefore, although this is a non-curriculum trip, places will be allocated first to those studying history GCSE, and then to any student in the current Year 10. Should there be more applicants than places then names will be drawn from a hat, first observing the above hierarchy. However, I would encourage any interested student in the current year 10 to apply, indeed, many non-historians from the current Year 11 gained a great deal from their experiences this year. It should be noted that if a student is accepted into the visit party now, but is involved in serious misconduct during Year 10 or 11, they may forfeit their place on the trip. This could lead to loss of monies paid unless a substitute can be found.

Yours sincerely,

D Waters

P Simon

Head of History

Assistant Head Teacher

Trip Organisers

Reply Slip: History Department Visit to WW1 Battlefields February 2012

To be returned to The Finance Office by Friday 24th June 2011

I wish my child _____ of House _____ Tutor _____

To take part in the History Department Visit to WW1 Battlefields February 2012

I attach a deposit cheque for £50 payable to St George's School / I have paid by Parentpay / Made Boarder's disbursement (please delete as appropriate)

Signed _____

Date _____