

Welcome

What was life like for the people and city of Leeds during the First World War?

The many ways in which the war was experienced in Leeds make the city a prime example of the effect of total war on British life. This trail covers both the immediate impact of the war in Leeds and its legacy, exploring recruitment, protest, entertainment, medicine and commemoration to build a picture of life in wartime.

Many of the buildings around Leeds which you pass every day have a fascinating wartime past and this trail will help you to explore the hidden histories of this city during the First World War.

Short Summary of the Trail

This trail will take you on a journey to some of Leeds's most important First World War sites, and tell the story of the significant people and places which illustrate the experience and contributions of Leeds in the war.

On this side of the leaflet you will find a brief background of both the First World War and its impact in Leeds, as well as a timeline of the key events of the period.

On the overleaf, the map will allow you to discover the stories and histories of sites around the city centre, showing how Leeds worked in wartime and contributed to the national war story.

It will take you around an hour and a half to walk the full trail. We recommend that you also allow time to explore some of the sites in more detail.

This trail has been produced in partnership with Leeds City Council as part of a series of maps which invite you to explore this vibrant and historic city.



The First World War and Leeds

The First World War broke out after the crisis created by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the 28th June 1914. On the 28th July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Over the following weeks the rest of Europe gradually descended into war. Germany declared war on France on the 3rd August, and Britain on Germany after German troops crossed into Belgium on the 4th August. On the home front the war was widely welcomed, with many assuming that the conflict would be over by Christmas. After four and a quarter years of fighting, however, the war finally finished with an armistice on the 11th November 1918, with a total of 9.5 million military deaths and 38 million casualties worldwide.

The people of Leeds experienced the effects of the war in a number of ways. Leeds played a crucial role as an industrial centre, helping to prepare for war by producing blankets, munitions and medical supplies. While men volunteered for the army, including the Leeds Pals Battalion, many women worked in munitions factories such as Barnbow Munitions Factory. Leeds's industrial contribution was viewed as a threat by the Germans, who attempted to bomb the city in November 1916 but only succeeding in damaging Harewood House. Leeds also contributed towards caring for the sick and wounded at a range of hospitals, including Beckett's Park and East Leeds War Hospital. In addition, Leeds took in 1,500 refugees from Belgium who were displaced by the German invasion. Some stayed in the Art Gallery and at Temple Newsam. In total, ten thousand people from Leeds lost their lives serving in various capacities through the war.

Timeline



June 28th Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

August 4th Britain declares war on Germany.

August 7th The British Expeditionary Force arrives in France.

August 8th The Defence of the Realm Act is passed, imposing censorship and security controls on the British population. These include pub licensing hours which remained in place until 2005.

September The first Belgian refugees arrive in Leeds. Leeds offered to take 1,000 citizens, but eventually 1,600 settled in the city.



January 24th The British Government introduces conscription.

February 21st Battle of Verdun commences.

July 1st First day of the Battle of the Somme, resulting in 57,000 British and imperial casualties.

July 1st Horace Illes, a sixteen-year-old from Woodhouse, is killed on the first day of the battle of the Somme. He had lied about his age in order to enlist at 14. A memorial window can be found in the Emmanuel Centre on Woodhouse Lane.

February 6th The Representation of the People Act is given Royal Assent, allowing women over the age of thirty to vote.

March 21st Start of the German Spring offensive.

April 25th Captain George Sanders, a recipient of the Victoria Cross from Leeds, becomes a military prisoner of war.



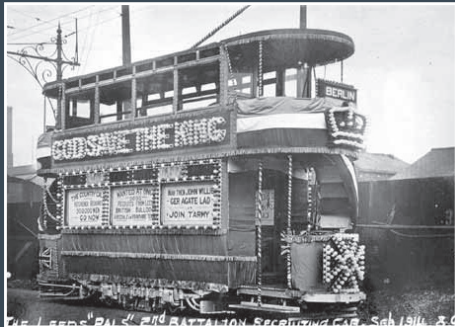
September 3rd Leeds Town Hall begins recruiting.

September 8th The Leeds Pal Battalion is formed, with 1,275 recruited in one week.

October 19th First battle of Ypres.

October 29th Temple Newsam becomes an auxiliary hospital.

December 16th German battleships bombard Whitby, Scarborough and Hartlepool, resulting in 137 deaths.



September 25th Zeppelins attack Leeds. Harewood House was the only site in Leeds ever to be bombed during the war.

December 5th The first of three explosions at Barnbow Munitions Factory which killed 40 women in total. Barnbow produced a total of 566,000 shells during the war.

August 8th Battle of Amiens and the start of the 100 Days offensive.

November 8th Armistice negotiations commence.

November 11th Armistice Day.

November 11th The last British soldier to die in the war, Private George Edwin Ellison from Leeds, is killed at Mons an hour and a half before the official ceasefire at 11am.

April 11th St Anne's Cathedral at Great George Street dedicates its War Memorial Chapel.

1914

1916

1918

1920

This timeline will introduce you to the most important dates of the war and the key events which took place in Leeds.

1915



January 5th Auxiliary war hospital established at Harewood House. Initially provision was made for 50 patients; this was later increased by using tents.

May 31st First German Zeppelin raid on London.

June Observation post established atop the Town Hall (see overleaf).

Spring 1915 All the art from the city is moved to Temple Newsam for safekeeping.

1917



April 6th The United States declares war on Germany.

March 8th Russian Revolution, which inspired the Leeds Socialist Convention.

June 3rd Leeds Socialist Convention (see overleaf).

June 3rd and 4th Anti-Jewish riots take place in Leylands area of Leeds, due to tensions over a perceived lack of recruitment from the Jewish population.

June 7th Battle of Messines. The army chaplain Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, or 'Woodbine Willie', who was educated at Leeds Grammar School, was awarded the Military Cross for his actions during this battle.

1919



January 27th Harewood House hospital wing closes, having treated 1,296 patients over the war.

1922



March 28th The Lady Chapel of Leeds Minster is rededicated as a Memorial Chapel.

October 14th Leeds War Memorial is first unveiled in City Square. It was moved to the Headrow in 1937.

Find out more...

There are a number of other places and resources which you can visit to find out more about the information included on this trail. If you are interested in medical history of Leeds, visit the Thackray Medical Museum, Beckett Street, Leeds LS9 7LN.

Sites outside of Leeds which were of great importance to the war and are open to visit include Harewood House, Beckett's Park Hospital (now the site of Leeds Beckett's Headingley Campus) and Temple Newsam. Please ask Leeds Tourist Information Office for leaflets and extra information about these sites.

To learn more about the history of the war, visit the University of Leeds's Legacies of War website, which explores a number of areas relating to the war. <https://arts.leeds.ac.uk/legaciesofwar/>.

You can explore the history of Leeds interactively at The Leeds and the First World War Historypin page which can be found at: <https://www.historypin.org/en/person/66427>.

References:

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Credits

This heritage trail has been researched and written by Imogen Graham, Zoe Pike, Alice Savage and Holly Smith, who are undergraduate students at the University of Leeds, as part of the FOAR2000 module which encourages students to get involved in academic research and make it accessible to the public. They were supervised by Jessica Meyer, Laura King and Tess Hornsby Smith.

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Other Trails in the Series:

Leeds History of Medicine Trail
Your M&S Leeds Heritage Trail
Leeds Industrial Heritage Trail
Leeds Potts Clocks Heritage Trail
Leeds LGBT Map
Leeds Waterfront
Leeds City Centre Map

These can all be found at Leeds Visitor Centre located at: The Headrow, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS1 3AA

They can also be found as PDFs online at: visitleeds.co.uk/essentials/pdf-downloads.aspx

Leeds Industrial Heritage Trail is also an app on www.yourtrailsapp.co.uk/leeds

Walk it

Leeds First World War Heritage Trail



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Leeds is very compact and walkable, easily accessible by bus, train or car. Leeds Bradford Airport is just half an hour from the city centre by bus. There are numerous car parks and ample blue badge car parking spaces in the city centre.

Leeds Visitor Centre

VisitLeeds is a friendly visitor information centre and art gallery shop located at the Leeds Art Gallery on The Headrow, open 7 days a week.

0113 378 6977
www.visitleeds.co.uk

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Leeds Travel Information

With up-to-the-minute information about car parking spaces, public transport and walking routes, travelling into and around Leeds has never been easier.

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1 City War Memorial

Leeds City War Memorial was originally situated in City Square by the Recruitment Office. The memorial was created in 1922 after much debate about how to commemorate the sacrifice of the city's inhabitants. Newspapers record a number of suggestions, including the building of a garden suburb to give disabled soldiers free housing, a children's hospital, or a 'Temple of Fame', which would include an art gallery, a free library, local and war museums. (*Yorkshire Post*, 11/11/18). Eventually a memorial statue was decided upon and Lord Lascelles performed the unveiling ceremony on the 14th October, 1922. Many of the original features of the monument still exist, including a figure of St George slaying the dragon, which represents war, and figures representing Peace which can be seen on the front and back. Interestingly, the original crowning figure of the memorial, a bronze Winged Victory, was replaced by a statue of the Angel of Peace in 1992, the architect Ian Judd arguing that 'we should have a peace statue, rather than one celebrating war'. (Hanson, 'Anatomy of a Monument')

Did you know?

One of the many suggestions for a memorial included the construction of a ring road. A correspondent to the Yorkshire Post in 1918 asked, 'What could be a more fitting memorial, as such a work, like the Roman and Great North Roads, would stand for all time as a fitting memorial'. (*Yorkshire Post*, 15/11/18).



2 The Art Gallery

Although formal exhibitions were cancelled in the Art Gallery after 1915, it held a variety of exhibitions during the war. Photography exhibitions were popular and helped encourage recruitment by showing examples of German brutality. Photographer Ivor Castle created a particularly poignant display of war photographs showing the grim aspects of men going 'over the top'. An exhibition of women's war work showcased their participation on the home front and was also used to encourage people to volunteer. Not only did the exhibitions rally support for the war but the Art Gallery also became physically involved with the war effort. Rooms were turned into dormitories to help house 300 Belgium refugees and meals were served to them in the sculpture gallery. Parts of the ground floor were allotted to the Food Control Committee, which was in charge of distributing and restricting food for the city.

Did you know?

Famous cartoonist, Louis Raemaekers (1869-1956) displayed his work at Leeds Art Gallery. His illustrations, some of which depicted Kaiser Wilhelm as an ally of Satan, were fiercely anti-German. This was discouraged in his home country of Holland, which was neutral. After moving to Britain he was recruited by the War Office to produce propaganda to encourage countries, such as the United States, to join the war.



6 The Empire Palace Theatre

Now the site of Harvey Nichols, go around the back of the building, inside the Victoria Quarter, to find the Empire Theatre. The building played an important role in entertainment during the war, helping raise both morale and money for charity. Film screenings depicted the Western Front to aid recruitment efforts, including films such as 'Britain Prepared', which documented the military preparations of the army, navy and munitions workers. Entertainment was also used to bring some light relief, with special discounted tickets for uniformed soldiers on leave. A number of Saturday Orchestral Concerts were also held throughout the war, playing a range of British, French, Russian and, interestingly, German music. This was acceptable, argued the *Yorkshire Mail* 'for Bach and Beethoven and the rest have nothing whatever to do with the Kaiser spirit of militarism and aggression'. (*Yorkshire Mail*, 5/9/14)

Did you know?

Troops were also entertained during their time in the trenches. In February 1916, the concert party of the West Riding Territorial Division visited the Empire, putting on their Pierrot pantomime act complete with costumes and makeup.

SEE FURTHER To listen to a recording of Miss Mona Vivian, who performed at the Empire in 1918 at a concert for blinded soldiers, visit: <https://www.historypin.org/en/person/66427-person/66427>.



7 The Coliseum

The Coliseum on Cookridge Street, today the home of the O2 Academy, was the site of the Leeds Socialist Convention on 3rd June, 1917. The meeting was called by the Labour Socialist and Democratic Convention to show support for the Russian Revolution, agree with the declared aims of the new Russian government and demand an end to the war. The convention was concerned with the removal of people's rights under the pretext of the war, through the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act. 1,200 delegates came from a range of parties, and included the suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst and Ramsay MacDonald, the future Labour Prime Minister. The convention attracted great criticism from the national press. *The Daily Express* reported on 'anarchy in Petrograd, chaos in the Russian armies and silliness in Leeds' (Thornton, *The Story of Leeds*). On the day of the conference, 3,000 people lined Cookridge Street in protest, booing the delegates as they entered. The meeting caused controversy within the socialist movement itself, with many believing that the meeting failed to face the realities of the war and was not representative of the working class opinion it was supposed to represent ('Report on Leeds Conference', *The Dockers Record* 1917).

Did you know?

The council urged hotels across Leeds not to take bookings made by those attending the conference. Delegates instead had to find private accommodation, sleep in dormitories at the Trades Hall, or travel to Bradford where Socialist Party members provided accommodation.



Key: 1 Trail



3 The Town Hall

Leeds Town Hall had a number of uses in the First World War. It was used to hold mass recruitment meetings, to imprison German immigrants who were seen as aliens in wartime, and as a place for city council meetings. On the 3rd September 1914, the Town Hall held a recruitment meeting for the Leeds Pals Battalion. 1,275 men enlisted by the 8th September. The dome tower of the hall, situated at the top of the hall, was used as a lookout point to check the city was blacked out. From June 1915, all the lights in the city had to be turned off on orders from central government to protect against Zeppelin raids. If lights could be seen from the tower, the watchmen would inform the police. The look-out post in the tower created an organised and successful blackout system, helping the city avoid being bombed by German Zeppelins, a type of airship. At the end of the war, the Town Hall was used as a place to celebrate the Armistice. 40,000 people gathered at the hall to celebrate and fireworks were let off in remembrance and celebration.

Did you know?

The nearest place to Leeds to be bombed during the war was Harewood House in November 1916. Harewood House was used as a military hospital in the war, taking recovering patients from Beckett's Park.



8 Thackray's Pharmaceutical Shop

Thackray's Pharmaceutical Shop was set up in 1902 with 25 employees to create medical equipment for doctors at the Leeds General Infirmary (LGI). During the war the company purchased specialist machinery which was used to produce a range of 'Aseptic' field dressings. These were accepted for use by the War Office. The dressings were surgically sterilised and sealed and given to soldiers at the front, to be opened if they were wounded. This official contract meant that Thackray's could employ more instrument workers over the course of the war, and shaped the future of the company as they were able to develop their bandage and surgical instrument production. They were also able to expand their sales of equipment. In 1916, for example, they produced surgical sterilisers for the LGI to help in the surgery theatres.

Did you know?

During the First World War, a Leeds farmer produced over a hundred guinea pigs and rabbits a week for the War Office. They were used to help create the inoculations against typhoid and tetanus, and in experiments to combat the use of poison gas. (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 4/8/16)



4 City Square

City Square was just as bustling in the First World War as it is today, and its central location made it the perfect site for a variety of functions. The recruitment office, now a commercial space which can be seen in the south-western corner of the square, was positioned here between 1915 and 1917. Authorities hoped the town-centre location would boost the number of people enlisting, as Leeds's initial figures were relatively low compared to cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. A touring cinema car on its way round the country was stationed in City Square in 1918. It played promotional war films to encourage recruitment, showing scenes of fighting in the war zones, as well as the work on the home front. Crowds would often fill City Square to welcome home the injured soldiers on their way from the station to Beckett's Park hospital. On sunny days the seats in City Square would be filled with these soldiers, basking in the sunshine, referred to as the 'boys in hospital blue' by the *Leeds Mercury*.

Did you know?

The Queen's Hotel lost one Swiss and two German waiters, as well as four French cooks, in August 1914. They were called up by their home countries. One German waiter took this especially hard, having married and started a family with an English woman.



9 The House of Leonora Cohen

The blue plaque at 2 Claremont Villas on Clarendon Road marks the home of Leeds-born suffragette Leonora Cohen. In 1909, she joined the Leeds Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), an organisation founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. Cohen supported the WSPU by organising meetings on Woodhouse and Hunslet Moor. She became well known due to her militant actions. After breaking the window of a government building with the WSPU in London in 1911, she was imprisoned in Holloway Prison for a week. In February 1913, she smashed a glass showcase in the Tower of London with an iron bar. In November 1913, when the Prime Minister H.H. Asquith was visiting Leeds, Cohen threw stones at a local government building and was arrested. She was imprisoned in Armley prison and went on hunger strike. During the war, Cohen worked in a munitions factory and became part of the General and Municipal Workers Union. The war had a considerable effect the public's attitude towards suffragettes. Their support of the war effort made their demands increasingly acceptable, and in 1918 the government passed the Representation of the People Act which gave women over 30 the right to vote.

Did you know?

In 1923, Leonora became the president of the Yorkshire Federation of Trade Councils, its first female president. She was awarded an OBE in the 1920s for service to public life.



5 Leeds Minster

The memorial to the Leeds Pals is on the left side of the Lady Chapel and is one of many memorials dedicated to the men of the Parish who fell in wars and conflicts. The Leeds Pals were one of many battalions across Britain made up of professional men who enlisted and fought together, called 'Pals' because they were recruited from the same areas, as neighbours, colleagues and teammates. The Leeds battalion was announced on 1st September 1914 and 300 men enlisted on the first day, with the numbers reaching over 1,000 by 25th September. (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 4/9/14) The battalion fought at the Somme in July 1916 where 24 officers and 750 of 900 men of the other ranks were lost.

Did you know?

Of the eleven men who were awarded the Victoria Cross in Leeds for services in the First World War, two were members of the Leeds Pals and were originally members of a 'Bantam' battalion - for soldiers who were fit to fight but shorter than regulations. Initially men had to be 5ft 3in to enlist, but the War Office created these new battalions so that men as short as 5ft could sign up.

SEE FURTHER There is another memorial to the Pals in Colsterdale in the Yorkshire Dales, about an hour and half's drive from Leeds City Centre, where the Leeds Pals were based during training.



10 The Brotherton Memorial

Located within the Parkinson building, the Brotherton War Memorial borders the entrance to the Brotherton Library. Unveiled in 1951, it commemorates the staff and students who died in the war. The memorial shows the First World War to be a global conflict, despite commonly being remembered as a European event. The names on this memorial demonstrate the range of people and nationalities involved, listed alphabetically to highlight the equal sacrifice of all men, regardless of rank. Jogendra Sen was an electrical engineering graduate born in Bengal, one of the first to join the Leeds Pals in 1914. Throughout the war, he remained the only non-white soldier to serve in the 15th West Yorkshire Regiment and is believed to be the first Bengali to have died in the war after being killed at the Somme in May 1916. The name of Edgar Geoffrey Sawyer (4th Australian Machine Gun Battalion) was recently added. Sawyer was invalided out of the armed forces and died of exhaustion in Australia on 31st May, 1918, but he was born in Bradford and served in Gallipoli, Egypt and Flanders.

Did you know?

Jogendra Sen was unable to move beyond the rank of private, despite the fact he was highly educated and spoke seven languages, as the British Army prohibited non-white officers.

For more information, visit Dave Stowe's blog: Pelican Road <https://pelicanroad.wordpress.com/>. 1920s for service to public life.