Great War Centenary

ACCESSIBLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VISITORS

VISITFLANDERS FLANDERSFIELDS1418.COM
Flanders Fields formed the dramatic backdrop for some of the bloodiest battles of the First World War for four long years. One hundred years after WWI broke out, the region’s landscape still tells the story of the war. It is home to hundreds of monuments and cemeteries that hold great historical significance for people all over the world.

We created this brochure in collaboration with the accessibility agency of Flanders, Inter, and the West-Flanders Province. Visitors from all over the world and of all ages, some of whom will have some form of accessibility requirement, are currently travelling to the area. The brochure contains all aspects of an accessible journey or daytrip: information and reception, cafes and restaurants, sites, museums, public services, transport, assistance and care... We hope it helps visitors with a disability or need for care to prepare a daytrip or holiday in the Westhoek.

Do you wish to read the story behind the remembrance of the Great War? Visit www.flandersfields.be or www.visitflanders.com > Flanders Fields.
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BROCHURE ‘CENTENARY OF THE GREAT WAR ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL’

In collaboration with the Flemish Accessibility Agency Inter and the province of West-Flanders, we realized the brochure ‘Great War Centenary – accessible to all.’ It provides slightly older tourists and holiday makers with a temporary or permanent disability or people in need of some extra comfort or care while on holiday with all of the necessary information in order to prepare for a visit to the Flanders Fields area. It takes into account all aspects of an accessible stay: information and reception, accommodation, restaurants, cafés, great war sites, transportation, parking spaces, assistance and care, etc., ... Although most of the information is primarily intended for those with mobility problems, the brochure also reports on initiatives offering additional facilities for other forms of disabilities.

BROCHURE ‘CENTENARY OF THE GREAT WAR ACCESSIBLE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VISITORS’

This additional brochure was realized in order to give an overview of those museums, events and other places of interest that offer extra facilities for people with a visual impairment. Those facilities are being indicated by the following symbol:

Whether a museum or another place of interest is accessible depends to a large extent on the person concerned. After all, each disability or limitation is different. We therefore also recommend that you always contact the venue concerned beforehand to get the information you need from your own perspective.
ComingWorldRememberMe: cross-border and cross-generational symbol of peace

During the commemoration period from 2014 to 2018, people all over the world can follow workshops entitled Coming World Remember Me to jointly mould 600,000 sculptures out of clay: one sculpture for each victim that perished on Belgian soil during the First World War. In 2018, at the end of the commemoration period, each of the sculptures will be brought together in a land-art installation in the Provincial Domain De Palingbeek in Ypres as a reverent remembrance.

Do you also want to take part in this one-of-a-kind project? It takes just fifteen minutes to produce a sculpture and there are various locations where you can do so until 2018. Want to find out where you can produce a sculpture? Go to http://www.comingworldrememberme.be/en

Discover the Westhoek by car

Westtoer has developed the “First World War car routes in the Westhoek” application. The app takes the visitor along important sites where the First World War played out. The app is richly illustrated with numerous historic documents, photos and texts and introduces you to a number of figures that share their experiences. It is possible to follow several planned routes (such as the No Man’s Land car route) or to compile your own route based on a list of personally selected points of interest. You can find the relevant accessibility information for each POI under the info symbol.

The app is available free of charge from the App Store and on Google Play.

www.flandersfields.be/nl/autoroutes
FLANDERS FIELDS IN 48 HOURS

DAY 1
1. MEMORIAL MUSEUM PASSCHENDAELE
2. LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY AND VISITOR CENTRE
3. TALBOT HOUSE
4. LAST POST/MENIN GATE

DAY 2
1. IN FLANDERS FIELDS MUSEUM
2. BAYERNWALD
3. THE YSER TOWER
MEMORIAL MUSEUM PASSCHENDAELE 1917

Berten Pilstraat 5a, 8980 Zonnebeke
+32 (0)51 77 04 41
info@passchendaele.be
www.passchendaele.be

The museum focuses on the military history of the war, and in particular the Battle of Passchendaele.

In 1917 the town of Passchendaele was the scene of some of the most dramatic events of the Great War. Almost half a million soldiers died, went missing or were seriously injured. Housed in a striking chateau, the museum in Zonnebeke focuses on the material aspects of the war, including uniforms, weaponry, engineered constructions and battlefield archaeology. Its reconstructed dug-outs create a realistic sense of what life would have been like for soldiers working and living in the trenches.

A section of the museum is dedicated to the Battle of Passchendaele, especially the contribution of soldiers from the various Commonwealth countries involved in the battle. The Remembrance Gallery, the last part of the museum extension, is dedicated to the remembrance of the many casualties who suffered and fought for Passchendaele. Next to the museum, the Passchendaele Memorial is a new park area devoted to the remembrance of the Great War which will includes small, individual, ‘poppy gardens’ dedicated to various nations that were involved in the Battle of Passendale.

Throughout the museum, you get to touch several objects and you can experience for example the odour of different types of gas.
LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery (begraafplaats en bezoekerscentrum)
Boescheepseweg 35, 8970 Poperinge \ +32 (0)57 34 66 76
lijssenthoek@poperinge.be

Lijssenthoek was the site of the largest evacuation hospital along the Ypres Salient. Today, Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery bears witness to more than four years of warfare, with the graves of 10,784 soldiers. The Visitor Centre, situated next to the cemetery, offers information on this unique site, including details about the daily life in the hospital and the (re)creation of the cemetery.

At the corner of the car park and the path to the visitors’ centre you will find a braille map of the site and another braille map of the visitors’ centre inside the building.

TALBOT HOUSE

Gasthuisstraat 43, 8970 Poperinge
+32 (0)57 33 32 28
info@talbothouse.be

The most well-known soldiers’ club of the Great War has been renovated. The garden has already received a makeover and various rooms in the house have been restored, including the chapel, kitchen and hall. Besides a museum, Talbot House is still the Every Man’s Club it has always been. Visitors can enjoy a cup of tea in the canteen or book a room and spend the night in its guest house!

A tablet application invites the visitor to follow them through the museum, garden and house. Each tour consists of a certain number of hotspots throughout the house, the garden and the museum. Once a tour has been selected the tablet will automatically show the visitor the direction in which he or she should walk. When the destination - in this case the first hotspot - is reached a “story” about that location will start to play. This story can contain video, a voice, a song, an image or even some text.
Menenstraat z.n., 8900 Ieper
www.lastpost.be - info@lastpost.be

The Mening Gate is the most famous war memorial for missing persons of the Commonwealth of the First World War in Belgium. The gate, built in a classical style following a design of Sir Reginald Blomfield contains the names of 54,896 missing soldiers of the Commonwealth countries (except New Zealand). The victims of the United Kingdom who fell after the 16th of August are mentioned by name on the Tyne Cot Memorial. Every evening at 8 pm, a deeply moving ceremony takes place under the vast arch of the Mening Gate: the traffic stops and buglers from the local fire brigade play ‘The Last Post’. The ceremony was begun in 1928. Sometimes the ceremony is attended by just few spectators, on more formal occasions hundreds can be present. Irrespective of numbers, the Last Post remains a unique and moving experience.

At the upper exterior level, you can touch the scale model, which is an exact replica of the monument.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS MUSEUM

Grote Markt 34, 8900 Ieper
+32 (0)57 23 92 20
flandersfields@ieper.be

The In Flanders Fields Museum, renovated in 2012, takes prime place as a must-see attraction in Ypres. A new permanent exhibition focuses on personal stories of ordinary people and establishes a link to the landscape of the First World War in West Flanders. The museum has doubled in size and now hosts a WWI knowledge centre. More than 2,000 original objects and documents are on display and visitors can follow four personal stories through interactive kiosks. New scenography highlights the most recent museum applications, including touch screens, interactive poppy bracelet, video projection and soundscapes. Everything contributes to a rich experience and submerges visitors in life on the front. In addition, visitors can now climb the bell tower for an extraordinary view of what was once a completely devastated region.
There are special guided tours for visitors with a visual impairment. All of the museum texts are also available in large print and in braille at the desk. At the market place (Grote Markt), in front of the Cloth Hall, you can find a bronze scale model.

Bayernwald is a unique reconstructed German site, consisting of two German mine tunnels, a mine shaft, and a system of trenches with five bunkers. The site can be reached by a pathway through the restored trenches. Information panels tell about events in the war and life at the front.

In the pavilion you can find a scale model of the site.
The extensive renovation works on the Museum aan de IJzer were completed in 2014. This museum tells the story of the frontlines between Belgium and Germany during the First World War via the stories of soldiers, refugees and citizens on both sides of the front. The museum is not non-committal, but gives a very clear message: No More War! The museum also looks at the political consequences of this war that led to the Flanders fight for the emancipation. In addition to the overview of the former front at the Yser, you can climb up the 84 meter-high tower and enjoy a stunning panoramic view over Diksmuide and Westhoek.

A general explanation in Braille is available next to the reception, as well as a scale model of the Yser Tower, the Pax Gate and the Crypt, showing the positioning of these buildings. Both the introduction film of the museum as well as the audio tape in the crypt are available in 4 languages.
In 1917, the Great War escalated in Flanders to become a Total War. Science, technology, industry, the economy and society form the cogwheels of a war machine running at full throttle. At the front the extent and intensity of the violence defies all imagination. An unprecedented number of troops, modern weapons and new technology constitute the machinery of armies that can no longer afford to lose. The artillery’s immense power of destruction causes genuine devastation to the landscape. Behind the front all of society is mobilised to keep the war industry going. Daily life becomes bleaker and the image of the opponent contracts into that of ‘the enemy’.

Today all we’ve been left with are the scars that blot the landscape and sites of remembrance and commemoration. Project 1917. Total War in Flanders’ project connects these various sites along a route of exhibitions and information points. An app and visitor guide will soon be available.
MEMORIAL MUSEUM PASSCHENDAELE 1917, ZONNEBEKE | P. 8
The imposing 'Villa Zonnedaele' houses the thematic exhibition about the crucial role held by the ravaged landscape during the Battle of Passchendaele. Both armies are forced to change their tactics, methods of attack and logistics. The impact on the ordinary soldier, in physical as well as psychological terms, is terrible.

TYNE COT CEMETERY VISITORS' CENTRE, ZONNEBEKE
An info-module in the visitors' centre near the impressive Tyne Cot Military Cemetery tells the story of the landscape. The visitor learns how to read the different layers of the landscape via an interactive panoramic table. The info-module answers the following question: what impact did the Third Battle of Ypres have and what traces did it leave behind that are still visible today?

THE HEUVELLAND VISITORS' CENTRE, HEUVELLAND (KEMMEL)
The thematic exhibition, 'Zero Hour 7-06-1917', presents the archaeology of a in The Heuvelland Visitors' Centre (ready by June 2017) and illustrates the material heritage of the Battle of the Mines, in which excavated objects play a key role. The visitor is introduced to the objects' functions during the Battle of the Mines and the way in which they were later found. The exhibition also reveals how war heritage has been dealt with since the Great War.

Sint-Laurentiusplein 1, 8950 Heuvelland (Kemmel)
+32 (0)157 45 04 55
toerisme@heuvelland.be
www.toerismeheuvelland.be

CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE, HEUVELLAND (KEMMEL)
The church in Kemmel houses the 'Irish Blood on Flemish Soil' thematic exhibition. Ireland has a turbulent history. During the Battle of the Mines, the 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division fought shoulder to shoulder. Given their political background, we are justified in calling this a unique collaboration. The joint participation has important symbolic value to this very day.

Sint-Laurentiusplein 1
8950 Heuvelland (Kemmel)

TOURIST INFORMATION POINT (TIP), MESEN
The '100 New Zealand Faces of Messines' thematic exhibition focuses on the vast impact the First World War had on New Zealand. Of a population of approximately one million inhabitants, almost ten percent set off for the other side of the world to take part in the Great War. This catastrophic impact is examined in detail using one hundred individual cases.

Markt 1, 8957 Mesen
+32 (0)157 22 17 14
info@mesen.be
www.mesen.be

IN FLANDERS FIELDS MUSEUM, YPRES | P. 10
The thematic exhibition in the Royal Hall in the In Flanders Fields Museum offers the visitor a general introduction to the Battle of the Mines and the Third Battle of Ypres. In the exhibition an important role is also afforded to the work of the Australian war photographers Frank Hurley & Hubert Wilkins and the re-worked contemporary photographs by Ian Alderman.

THREE INFO-MODULES IN THE YPRES SALIENT, YPRES
Each of the three info-modules shows the positions of the Allied armies on the eve of the Third Battle of Ypres. At each location films are used to reflect on the terrible storm that was soon to erupt, a storm that would dramatically reshape the landscape surrounding Ypres.

GUYNEMER-PAVILJOEN, LANGEMARK-POELKAPELLE (POELKAPELLE)
The Guynemer Pavilion (ready by June 2017) houses a two-part exhibition, which informs the visitor about the French story and military aviation during the Battle of Passchendaele. The part played by the French army proved to be crucial in the predominantly Anglo-Saxon offensive. Although French forces found themsel-
ves in serious crisis in 1917, they were still able to advance using a more cautious approach, to the Vrijbos in Houthulst. Moreover in 1917, military aviation was used on a large scale for the very first time. Aviation evolved from a purely observational role to become an integral component of the war machine.

Brugseweg 126-128, 8920 Lange-mark-Poelkapelle (Poelkapelle)

**GASTHUISCHAPEL POPERINGE**

On 15 November 1917, thirteen Chinese perished during a grenade attack on their encampment. The story did not make it into the great history books. The fact that Chinese were present during the First World War is still the cause for consternation among many people today. The presence of the Chinese in the Westhoek and the prejudices and views related to a foreign culture play a major role in this exhibition. The starting point is the perception, the way in which the presence of a foreign culture can lead to prejudices, snap judgements and rumours. The exhibition exposes this approach. Was the ‘tsjing’ of 1917 the Chinese chip shop of 2017? A corresponding application leads visitors to historic sites. From the start of September, the Chinese story will be concluded in all its colourful glory with a festival on and around the Grote Markt in Poperinge. China back in town!

Gasthuiskapel, Gasthuisstraat 1a, 8970 Poperinge +32 (0)57 34 66 76 toerisme@poperinge.be www.poperinge14-18.be

**LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY VISITORS’ CENTRE, POPERINGE | P. 9**

An info-module near the impressive Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery tells the story of the preparations and the size of the hospital site on the occasion of the Third Battle of Ypres. Nothing was left unprepared, which resulted in a palpable silence before the storm. The immense size of the hospital site in 1917 proves that the storm struck hard.

Drie Grachten (Three Canals) Site, Houthulst (Merkem)

This info-module tells the story of the destruction of the Drie Grachten site by French artillery in the run-up to the Third Battle of Ypres. The module also focuses on the storming of the position by the Fusiliers Marins Battalion (French Marines). Autochrome colour photographs - very rare in those days - meant that news of this local victory spread far and wide.

Poelkapellestraat 44 8650 Houthulst

For more detailed information about the adaptations and facilities at the different sites please contact Inter Events by sending an e-mail to pieter.remmerie@intro-events.be.
PROVINCIAAL DOMEIN DE PALINGBEEK

Palingbeekstraat z.n., 8902 Ieper
BEZOEKERSCENTRUM: Vaartstraat 7, 8902 Zillebeke
+32 (0)15 72 08 40
bc.palingbeek@west-vlaanderen.be - www.west-vlaanderen.be/palingbeek

Extensive area for walking with lots of flora and fauna. The paths are easily accessible. There is an ecologic farm where you can voluntarily help, and which is suitable for people with a learning or motor disability and for deaf, hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired participants.
CUSTOMIZED TRAVEL ADVICE

Where can I find holiday accommodation to meet my needs? Which museums provide a tactile experience or have audio information? Where can I find a restaurant where it will be safe to eat with a gluten allergy? Which travel firms take my special needs into account? Which coach companies have a vehicle with a wheelchair lift?

Flanders wants everyone to get the best welcome: young and old, with or without limitations or care needs, etc. VISITFLANDERS is happy to help you with your holiday or getaway if you have special needs or wishes.

Contact us for free and independent travel advice:

Grasmarkt 61, 1000 Brussels
+32 (0)2 504 03 40
accessible@visitflanders.com
www.visitflanders.com/accessibility

YOU NEED ASSISTANCE ON YOUR HOLIDAY?

You can of course bring your own assistance on your holiday or daytrip. If you decide to travel by yourself, you’ll need someone assisting you at your holiday destination. In that case feel free to contact us; we will try and help you find a solution.

Grasmarkt 61, 1000 Brussel
+32 (0)2 504 03 40
accessible@visitflanders.com
TRAIN

Belgian Rail provides assistance when boarding or disembarking a train in 131 stations. Find out which stations offer (free) assistance: www.belgianrail.be/en > Customer Service > Passengers with reduced mobility > Stations with assistance. Assistance must be reserved at least 24 hours in advance. Make your request for assistance via www.belgianrail.be/en > Customer Service > Passengers with reduced mobility > Reserve your assistance or dial +32 (0)2 528 28 28. You can also download or request the brochure ‘Guide for travellers with reduced mobility’, also available in Braille or audio CD.

BUS

If you want to learn more about the accessibility policy of the De Lijn company, navigate to www.delijn.be > About De Lijn > Organisation > Responsible enterprise > Accessibility.

PARKEREN

Finding a parking place in the Westhoek (or on the coast) is a lot easier using the website www.navigeerparkeer.be. This gives you a handy list of the parking spaces reserved for people with a disability. You can zoom in on a map or aerial photo for each municipality until you are right over the parking place. You can even get the dimensions and a photo of each space so that you know whether it is entirely suitable to your needs. This site also gives you detailed instructions on how to locate the reserved parking places on your GPS device. Whoever holds a European parking ticket for people with a disability, can also park in Flanders in parking spots reserved for people with a disability parking sticker. Whether it is possible to park in zones of paid parking for free and/or unlimited differs from municipality to municipality. So it’s best to always check the parking meters.

At www.visitflanders.be/accessibility, you can discover practical tips about flying, where you can find an accessible taxi, lift bus or even a mobile home, etc.
EXTEND YOUR VISIT TO FLANDERS FIELDS WITH A TRIp TO THE FLEMISH COAST OR BRUGES.
RELAXING AT THE FLEMISH COAST

For many local and foreign vacationers our 42 miles (or 67 km) long coastal strip is and remains the holiday destination of choice. The sandy beaches are ideal for children. During high season, life guards ensure everyone’s safety. Tourists can enjoy a healthy holiday thanks to the large quantities of salt and iodine in the Flemish sea air. You can also wander along the dike and the boardwalks, rent a bicycle or visit one of the many coastal attractions. And enjoying a nice bite to eat creates the perfect ending to a visit to the coast. However, our ten coastal municipalities do not just offer activities to please everyone’s taste but also to suit everyone’s needs. Slightly older tourists and holidaymakers with a temporary or permanent disability or people in need of some extra comfort or care while on holiday can also enjoy a holiday at our coast with peace of mind.

Discover the many assets of the Flemish coast in our brochure ‘The Flemish coast, accessible for everyone’. You can order or download it via www.visitflanders.com/accessibility > Brochures.

BRUGGE, UNESCO WERELDERFGOEDSTAD

Bruges is also located just a stone’s throw away from the Westhoek. This Flemish winner has everything for an unforgettable city trip: medieval alleys and canals, world class chocolatiers, ancient Flemish heritage in churches and castles, and of course superb lacework.

More inspiration for an accessible visit to Bruges can be found in our brochure ‘Bruges, accessible for all’. The brochure gives you inspiring and accessibility related info on the main tourist attractions of Bruges, but also contains an obstacle-free walk in the old city centre.