



# *Tonbridge* **First World War Walking Trails**

***Revealing the history of local people,  
places and events***

**These trails were developed in partnership with  
Pam Mills and Dave Swarbrick**

[www.kentww1.com](http://www.kentww1.com)



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## Contents

<b>Page 2</b>	Trail information, travel, parking and facilities information. Walking advice disclaimer and glossary
<b>Page 3</b>	Introduction
<b>Page 4–17</b>	Central Trail
<b>Page 18-23</b>	North Trail
<b>Page 24-28</b>	South Trail
<b>Page 29-31</b>	Other points of interest
<b>Page 32</b>	Quiz
<b>Page 33-34</b>	Maps

This booklet is designed to be used to follow the First World War trail for Tonbridge in association with the trail map on the back page and the numbers in the booklet refer to the numbers on the map.

**All trails are accessible digitally at [www.kentww1](http://www.kentww1) on 100 miles tab, where you will find a link to an app.**

### Travel information:

By train: Use South Eastern Rail to get to Tonbridge Train Station. Follow SATNAV to the starting points.

- (1) Central Trail Starting Point: TN9 1BG
- (2) North Tonbridge Trail Starting Point: TN9 1LS
- (3) South Tonbridge Trail Starting Point: TN9 2HR

### Parking:

Central Tonbridge Trail: Upper Castle Field Car Park, Long Stay (Pay and Display)

For North and South Tonbridge Trails use street parking where permitted.

### Places of rest / Facilities:

- Tourist Information office: in the Castle
- Public restrooms: the Castle, The Old Fire Station
- Refreshments: The Old Fire Station

Always use designated crossing points even if they are not shown in any walking guidance, neither Kent in WW1/ 100 miles for 100 years nor any associates assumes any liability for loss, damages or injury whilst following this trail.

### - Walking Advice - Health and Safety

Some of the locations shown on our maps can be dangerous, particularly coastal areas where the incoming tide may cut off routes, and cliff edges may be prone to collapse. Always check local safety information before travelling, and use caution when visiting.

Our maps and points of interest are provided for historical information only. If you are not familiar with the area, always walk with an appropriate OS map.

For schools and groups, a pre-visit should be undertaken by the organiser. Any educational walks or visits must be arranged in advance through [e-Go](http://e-Go).

Please view the following websites for important health and safety information for walking:

- [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) – Rules for Pedestrians
- [www.walkingandhiking.co.uk](http://www.walkingandhiking.co.uk) – Health & Safety When Walking

## Disclaimer

Kent in WW1/ 100 miles for 100 years has used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within the trails. Despite every effort to the contrary, errors, omissions or discrepancies may have occurred in preparation of these. Neither Kent in WW1/ 100 miles for 100 years nor any associates assumes any liability for loss or damages incurred due in part or in whole to such errors.

## Glossary

**RAMC** stands for Royal Army Medical Corps

**VAD** is the abbreviation for the Voluntary Aid Detachment formed before the War of members of the Red Cross and members of the St John Ambulance. These were men and women who were mainly volunteers.

**YMCA** stands for Young Men's Christian Association.

## Introduction

**Tonbridge** in the **First World War** was a bustling town with the inhabitants being reminded of the War on a daily basis. They would have been aware of the **increased rail traffic** as Tonbridge was on the main line between London and the coast. Tonbridge was used as a stopping point for troops on their way overseas; these soldiers would be **billeted around the town**, sometimes in local pubs. Tonbridge station was also where **ambulance trains** carrying wounded soldiers were met by local male volunteers from the **Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD)**.

**Quarry Hill House** was handed over to be used as an auxiliary hospital and received its first wounded, who were **Belgian** soldiers, in **October 1914**. Many **local women** served with the VAD, their roles ranging from nursing, to cooking and housework. As well as treating wounded Belgian soldiers the town played its part in welcoming and supporting **Belgian civilian refugees** throughout the War.

The local inhabitants attended fund raising concerts in the **Castle** grounds which was also the venue for **First Aid** training as War broke out. Concerts were given at the Public Hall for soldiers billeted locally and the **Public Hall** was also the venue of a soldiers club which was open to all ranks.

During the War **3000** men from Tonbridge served and **346** were **killed** who are remembered in the Memorial Garden. The cemetery contains a number of **Commonwealth War Graves**, arranged in date order, and the fallen are also remembered on family memorials.

The Tonbridge trail is in 3 parts Central (approx 2.1 miles – 3.25 km), Northern (approx 1.25 miles, 2.5 km) and Southern (approx 1 mile-1.8 km)

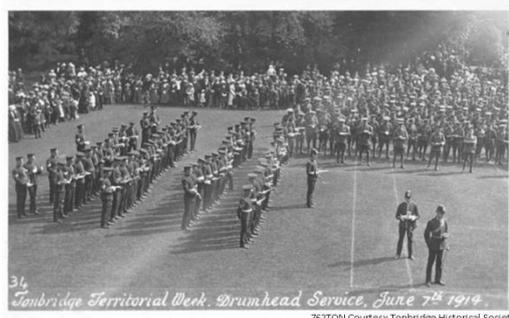
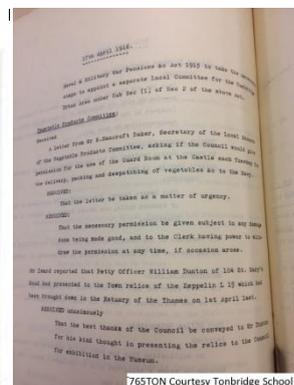
We very much hope that you enjoy following this trail and discovering the people, places and events which shaped Tonbridge in the First World War

**Note:** text in 'burgundy' shows directions to a particular stop.

## Central Trail Approximately 2.1 miles (3.25 km)

### 1. Upper Castle Fields

Welcome to Tonbridge. Let's step back in time and explore some of the links to WW1. From here you can see the magnificent Castle, built by Richard FitzGilbert one of the Norman Lords. **Tonbridge Castle** was an important focal point for the town during the First World War with training for the **VAD detachments** held inside and soldiers using the grounds for **drill practice**.



Tonbridge had a population of approximately **15,000** at this time and some **3,000 men** served during the war, about one in five of the total population. By the end of the war there were more than **350 men who had died**, 342 of whom were recorded at the time on the Town Memorial. [For a full listing of all the casualties please consult "**Tonbridge Roll of Honour – Great War**" held at the library.] According to the Council minutes from April 1916 Tonbridge Castle was also used as a collecting area for **food to send to forces**.

Next to Tonbridge Castle there were **hot baths** and according to *The Courier* dated January 11, 1918, 'Mr Lees enquired whether the Council baths were being used and appreciated by the soldiers'. The Chairman replied: that 'they are being very freely used. Only today a Corporal told me the soldiers much appreciated, and that they got all the hot water they desired'.

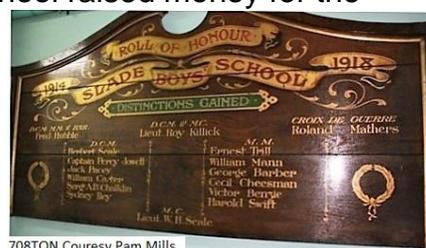
(Source: <https://tonbridgepeopleandancestry.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/1918-soldiers-love-hot-bath-photo.html>)

To the north of the Castle see **Slade School**

Many schools, if not all, raised money for the **War Fund**. Some, such as Judd School, raised money for the **Kent Prisoner of War** fund and Sussex Road School raised money for the Belgian children.

Slade School was another local school with a Roll of Honour (part of it still visible today) listing the pupils and masters who served in the War.

All schools were used as **billeting** for visiting soldiers to the Town and children were given an **unexpected holiday break**.



## 2. The Fire Station

Leave the Castle grounds and walk towards the Bank Street. On the junction of Castle Street and Bank Street, you will see

**Old Fire Station:** At one point during WW1 **25 men were billeted in this station.** Fred Boyde lived at the Fire Station; he was the volunteer Deputy Transport Officer for the VAD arranging for **wounded soldiers** to be moved to local hospitals from the ambulance trains arriving at the station any time of the day or night. In other parts of the country there were **women fire-fighters.**



From the Tonbridge Free Press:

*'A meeting at the Tonbridge Division of the Ambulance Department of the S.E. District of the National Fire Brigades was held at the Fire Station, Tonbridge, on Saturday afternoon last. Capt. Hedley Peters, the Hon Secretary of the S.E. District, presided.*

*The Fifteen Brigades which form the Tonbridge Division are Tonbridge. Tonbridge Wells Borough, Tonbridge Wells and District, Tonbridge Union, Southborough, Sevenoaks, Leigh, Seal, Combe Bank, Westerham, Tenterden, Farnborough, Falconhurst, Edenbridge and Bayham Abbey.*

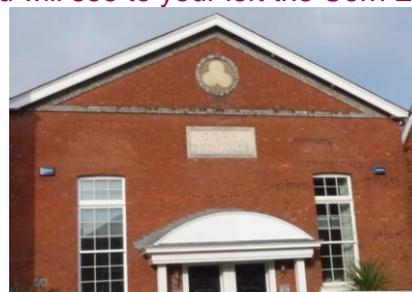
*Capt. Peters and Capt. Bradley (who commands the Division) addressed the representatives in the first place calling upon all those who are eligible to enlist in Kitchener's army, and those who owing to age limit and otherwise are unable to join to take up ambulance work and make themselves efficient.*

*At the present time the Division would be able at an hour's notice to muster either at Tonbridge or Tunbridge Wells, close on one hundred qualified and uniformed ambulance men and this number is being rapidly increased as nearly the whole of the men who are not already certified are being instructed in stretcher work. In spite of the large number of men available for ambulance work the Fire Service will not be impaired. The Ambulance Department of the Nation Fire Brigade Union by an agreement executed in May of this year is affiliated to the British Red Cross Society. A class of over thirty men has been arranged, by Captain Bradley, at the Fire Station and Dr Newton is kindly undertaking the lectures.'*

According to the Council Minutes dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 1919, six firemen, **namely H.J. Martin, F. Hosier, W. Clarke, F. Bristowe, H.G. Gabriel, C. Butler and W. Ingrass, and the widow of H.G. Gabriel** were presented with the Mons medals for volunteering for British Red Cross work in France and Belgium during September – October 1914. The medals were presented by the Chairman of the Council.

## 3. Bank Street Corn Exchange

Walking down Bank Street towards the High Street you will see to your left the Corn Exchange.



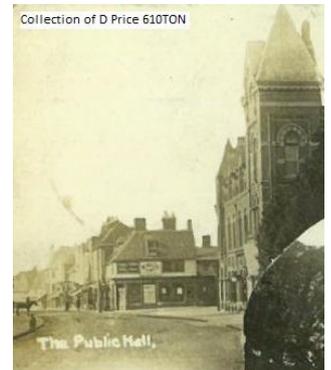
**The Drill Hall** for the Royal West Kent regiment was in the building formerly used as the Corn Exchange. The image shows men lining up to **enlist in the Royal West Kent regiment** in 1914. During the War the Drill Hall was used extensively for recruiting and by various units:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Bn Queens Own Royal West Kent Regt;
- No 1 Coy Kent Fortress Royal Engineers;
- Kent Cyclist Bn;
- Armoury and drill hall of C Coy of 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion No 1 (Works Coy) Kent Fortress Royal Engineers Territorial Force.

Behind this was a cattle market all now developed for housing.

Walking onto the High street, we can see a new row of shops on the left this was the location of the **Public Hall** & just along the way we see **Blair House** this was home to **Tonbridge Free Press** for a while.

Concerts were given at the Public Hall for soldiers billeted locally, the **Public Hall** was also the venue of a soldiers club open to all ranks.



## 4. Tonbridge School

Continue the walk to **Tonbridge School in High Street, on the left**, with the former chapel building to the fore; it's now a lecture theatre. You will see the gates dominated by boars' heads, built by stone mason **Henry Spickett**.



At the start of the Great War, 234 Old Tonbridgians (OT) held commissions in the active lists of the Army and Navy, with 124 in the reserve and territorial forces. These ex-pupils were the first to be **deployed in 1914**. The total number of (OT) who eventually served in the War was 2382, and 21 masters. **The Roll of Honour** includes the names of **415 OTs** and **3 masters who fell**.



In 1925, Baron Ironside, an Old Tonbridgian, unveiled the School's own war memorial, which was dedicated by the Bishop of Birmingham, also an Old Tonbridgian, which the whole school passes every day in the ante-chapel.

There is a beautiful memorial garden opened in July 2016 to mark 100 years since the Battle of the Somme.

Please note that the garden is not open to the public.



Eric Stuart Dougall VC - Tonbridge School

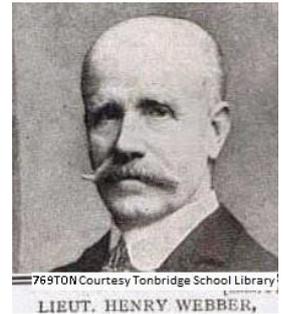
**Eric Stuart Dougall RFA (Royal Field Artillery)**

Killed in action Mount Kemmel 14.4.1918 age 32

His Victoria Cross (VC) was awarded on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1918 for conspicuous bravery and skilful leadership in the field.

He remained calm in battle and is remembered by his quote *“So long as you stick to your trenches I will keep my guns here”* which had an inspirational effect on all ranks. He was quoted as being a most fearless and determined officer, unselfish and popular with all ranks.

**Henry Webber**, an Old Boy of Tonbridge School, was the oldest combatant to die in the Great War, **aged 68**. He was born in Tonbridge in 1849, later lived at Tunbridge Wells, educated at Tonbridge School and Oxford University. He served as a Lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, South Lancs. Regiment, and was killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1916. He had **enlisted to serve with his three sons**- all of whom survived.



Source <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/4676865>

**5. Ivy House**



Cross the High Street in an appropriately safe place and head back towards the town centre, until you reach The Ivy House on the left.

Opened at the time of Edward IV in the late 1400s this was once a horse keeper’s house. It was known as **the Elephant and Castle** and the inn sign still shows this. Because it was covered in ivy locals referred to it as the **Ivy House** and the name has stuck.

After the outbreak of World War I the **Defence of the Realm Act** was passed by Parliament in 1914. One section of the Act concerned the hours pubs could sell alcohol, as it was believed that alcohol consumption would interfere with the war effort. It restricted opening hours for licensed premises to luncheon (12:00 to 14:30) and supper (18:30 to 21:00).

All public houses had to adhere to this. In Tonbridge on Sundays the recommended supper opening was 8-9pm. Also forbidden was buying someone else a drink – ‘treating’ as it was known at the time, people could be fined if they did so.

## 6. Allwork Bros. Photo Studio

Follow the High Street until you reach No. 177 High Street.

The **Allwork Brothers** ran the studios, photographing local men and those from regiments billeted in the town, for example soldiers from the Lincoln yeomanry. The pictures were produced as **cards for the men to send home**.

This one has this written on the back.

**Trooper A.E. Wright & Pals. 2/1 Lincoln Yeomanry, Tonbridge, Kent. 1917**



Source: <https://www.worldwar1postcards.com/real-photographic-ww1-postcards.php>

## 7. St Peter's and St Paul's Parish Church Memorial

Follow the High Street until you reach Church Lane, then turn left.



Colin Blythe – Parish Church war memorial



There are many names on the **memorial found inside** the church with **Colin Blythe** the most famous. He played cricket for both Kent and England. He was a left arm spinner, probably one of the finest of the early part of the last century. He was born on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1879 at Dartford, he moved to Tonbridge in the early 1900s with his wife, Gertrude. At the outbreak of the War he enlisted in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and he was killed in action by shell fire near **Passchendaele** on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1917. In 2009, when the England Cricket team visited the Flanders war graves they laid a stone cricket ball at his grave. *"It was a deeply moving and humbling experience,"* said Captain Andrew Strauss.



The Ladies' Committee [The War Refugees Sub-committee] organised a New Year's Day party which was hosted in the **Parish Room in East Street** in Tonbridge in 1915. Every refugee in Tonbridge was invited and everybody was given a gift.

In February 1915 the parish room was used to billet a **100 men**.

The parish room was also used by the **YMCA** (Young Men's Christian Association) for meetings for soldiers billeted elsewhere in the town.



Please check the website of the church ([tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk](http://tonbridgeparishchurch.org.uk)) for opening times.

## 8. Man of Kent Pub

Standing in front of the Church, turn right and walk through the churchyard towards Church Street, then turn right onto East Street and follow it until you reach Man of Kent on your right.



The Inn sign used to feature **Field Marshall Sir John French**, who was in command of the British Army on the Western Front from August 1914 to December 1915. He was called a Kent man of the First World War.

## 9. Rose and Crown Pub

Rejoin the High Street and turn right (walk a few metres up the High Street), see Rose and Crown Inn on your right (125 High Street).

Due to sudden influx of troops in 1915 **the Rose and Crown** public house was used to billet men and officers. This was against the wishes of Lord Kitchener who did not approve of public houses being used as billets but there was no alternative as the rest of the town was full.

The stables to the rear of the Inn were used for stabling the horses. This was a time when our visitors on their way to war outnumbered our population. In one day The Rose and Crown provided accommodation for 100 men and 32 officers.

If you walk a little further, you'll reach **129 High Street**. This was where Tonbridge Free Press was located. It was owned by William Blair & launched in 1869, also during WW1 they accepted the parcels and letters for the **Belgian refugees** who were living in the town.



## 10. The Chequers

The rooms of **The Chequers**, 122 High Street (walk back down the High Street and look right across the Street), were also made use of for billeting troops.

During the First World War it was run by the **Cantle family**. The landlord AJ Cantle rescued a young woman from drowning in the Medway in February 1917 - she had become overwrought with worry about her husband serving on the Western Front. Mr Cantle received the **Royal Society Humane Award** for his brave action.



Information source: Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser – Friday 04 May 1917 ([www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))

## 11. Lyons Crescent and Spicketts Stone Masons

Continue the walk along the High Street to the next road on the left, Lyons Crescent.

Spicketts Stone Masons could be found half way down on the right.

The company made the boars' heads for the Tonbridge School entrance.

Stephen Spickett and his sons, as a family ran the stone masons in Lyons Crescent. In 1916, as a skilled tradesman, **Henry Spickett** was given two months' authorised exemption from conscription in order to put his business affairs in order. In February 1917 he joined the Royal Engineers and became a **tank driver**.

On returning from the war, Henry recommenced his work as a stone mason with the family business. He was later commissioned to build the first **War Memorial**, it was fitting that he was able to play a significant role in the tribute to his **former comrades**.

0589  
773TON Source National Archives



## 12. Post Office - now Pizza Express

Return to the High Street and turn left to follow it towards the river.

**The Post Office** had to take on temporary male and **female staff** to replace the men who enlisted. There was uproar when deliveries were cut to 5 a day during the War, during the War it had to move to bigger premises, where Wetherspoons is now.



*“Christmas of 1917 has again been a very busy time at the Post Office. Many thousands of parcels have been despatched, including a large proportion to our soldiers and sailors. This has entailed a great deal of extra work, which has fallen upon the temporary staff, male and female, who have taken the places of those of the regular staff who have joined the Forces. The Postmaster of the time, Mr W.H.A. Tooner, had the satisfaction of*

*finding that the mass of work was very efficiently dealt with. The payment of separation allowances to the number of nearly two thousand also kept the staff at the counter very busy. On Christmas Eve and Christmas morning the staff were provided with refreshment, and the Postmaster, in a few well-chosen words, expressed his thanks to all the staff, male and female, for the splendid effort they had made under circumstances which would have been trying to officials of long experience. Miss Deacon again kindly sent gifts of almanacs and literature for the staff.”*



Source of information The Courier 28 December 1917

### 13. Whitefriars Press Medway Wharf Road

Continue walking along the High Street, cross the bridge and to your left you will see Medway Wharf Road, home to Whitefriars Press. If you walk about 100 yards along this road you will see the design of the new flats, which is similar to that of the original building.

In **August 1914** men who were not already Territorials rushed to enlist in Lord Kitchener's new army. Men who had worked at **Whitefriars Press** joined together as **Pals**, those killed in action are named on the War Memorial.



686TON Courtesy Tonbridge Historical Society



#### Whitefriars Press Go to War

This photo shows the send-off given to the recruits from **Whitefriars Press** as they march passed.

Men known to have worked at Whitefriars Press – The Fallen (further details see on the website of Tonbridge Historical Society [www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk))

- Sergeant William Nelson Carter, Royal West Kent Regiment D.C.M.
  - 2, Church Row
  - Enlisted 1<sup>st</sup> September 1914
  - Killed in Action 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1918
  
- Private William Corke, Royal Sussex Regiment
  - 117, Shipbourne Road
  - Enlisted 20<sup>th</sup> June 1916
  - Killed in Action 20<sup>th</sup> November 1917
  
- Private Herbert William Evans, Queen's Own [Royal West Kent Regiment]
  - Pembury Road
  - Enlisted September 1914
  - Died of Wounds 6<sup>th</sup> April 1918
  
- Sapper John George Hollomby, 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Kent Field Company, Royal Engineers
  - 33, Dernier Road
  - Enlisted 27<sup>th</sup> October 1914
  - Drowned 28<sup>th</sup> October 1915 [HMS *Hythe*]
  
- Sapper Percy Robert Hunt 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Kent Field Company, Royal Engineers
  - 110, Vale Road
  - Enlisted 7<sup>th</sup> January 1915
  - Drowned 28<sup>th</sup> October 1915 [HMS *Hythe*]

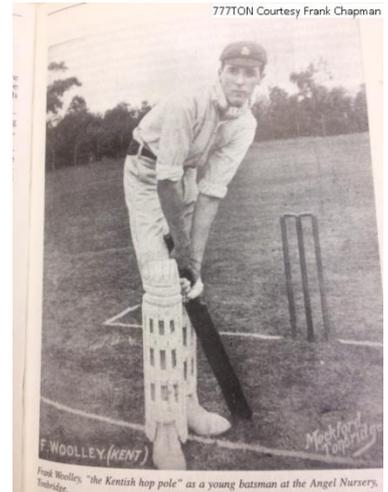
## 14. Frank Woolley

Follow the High Street until you reach 78, High Street, Tonbridge [now Starbucks, on the opposite side of the street].

**Frank Woolley**, the famous cricketer [born 1888], enlisted in the Royal Naval Air Service as an aircraftsman [fitter]. He served in various bases, notably Felixstowe. After the war he returned to playing county cricket for Kent.

There were **four Woolley brothers**, three of whom, served in the Great War. The Woolley family had a **cycle shop on from the 1890s**, and all of the brothers worked as fitters or engineers of one sort or another.

Charles Woolley [born 1882] enlisted in the Royal Engineers and served in the Gallipoli campaign. After the war, he went back to **work in the family cycle business**.



Claude Nevill Woolley [born 1886], who like his brother Frank was a county cricketer, in his case for Northamptonshire, enlisted in the Kent [Fortress] Royal Engineers in October 1914, at the same time as Colin Blythe, and was serving with him when Blythe was killed in action. Claude was wounded in the same action.

## 15. Belgian refugees 47 High Street

Keep following the High Street to **47 High Street**.

**Tonbridge War Refugees** committee was set up on September 23rd 1914 to raise funds and provide hospitality for Belgian refugees. This was their HQ and provided temporary lodging; people in **Tonbridge lent their houses to the refugees**.

During the early stages of WW1 it has been stated that over a **million Belgians** fled from the German armies to countries such as Holland, France and Britain.

More than **2,500 local committees**, supported by local authorities, were set up across the country. Hundreds of charity initiatives and events were organised.

At the fall of Antwerp Tonbridge saw its first guests arrive, pleas had gone out for accommodation and **many homes were placed** at the committee's disposal. Many offers of hospitality unfortunately could not be taken up as the request was for young children. Headquarters at Aldwych had stated that lone children should be placed in institutions. In fact one such young girl was placed in the **Our Ladies Convent in Tonbridge**.

For many, helping the refugees was their way of contributing to the wider war effort.



## 16. Tonbridge Junction

Continue along the High Street, until you reach the



**Tonbridge Junction** would be the way for onward carriage of troops to the coast and one of the unloading points for the injured from the ambulance trains from the ports.

There were two hundred 'stopping stations' - railway stations that received sick and wounded men and women for onward **transfer to local hospitals by motor car or ambulance**, and a list of these can be found in *'British Railways and the Great War'*, one of these being Tonbridge.



Troops guarding their kit having disembarked at Tonbridge and waiting to be sent to their billets

## 17. Tonbridge Library

Cross the High Street at an appropriately safe place and keep following it back towards the starting point until you reach Tonbridge Library on your left.

The **Reference Room** in the library was given up to **Belgian refugees** by the Urban District Council to serve as a reading room where provision of newspapers was delivered such as the *Independent Belge* and other literature. The library also provided space for **writing and correspondence**. This room was well attended with an average of 25 people. However the Belgians did take to playing cards and this was raised at a council meeting and a request sent to desist! English lessons were also offered in the Technical Institute and classes were well attended.



### Druce Cheal, the Librarian

This is the story of **Druce Cheal**, the librarian, related by his son, Alan Cheal.

*'Dad & his fellow sapper, (Jock Armour) were laying mines in front of our trenches, when a sudden German advance cut them off. They twice managed to creep through enemy lines, until they managed to unite with an artillery position, which was running short of ammunition. Nearby was a mule train that was carrying ammunition, but that had been hit by enemy shells and most of the mules were dead. So the two sappers ferried shells to the gunners, until the position became hopeless. The lieutenant then spiked the gun and jotted down their names*

and numbers (which I think was a remarkable thing to do, with everything going on.) And they all then retreated once again, to rejoin units. Hence how the two sappers got an M.M. each. Following the war, Dad became a civil servant, at Hastings and later Northampton. When he retired, he moved back to Fairlight near Hastings where he enjoyed his twilight years. Sadly he died in 1974.'

Note: 18 Avebury Avenue, (if you decide to walk a little further) is the location of the **National Food Kitchen** which was opened in 1918. The kitchens were intended to provide wholesome meals for all classes, with a varied daily bill of fare, including: soup, joints, steak, milk pudding, vegetables – **meals were at a fixed price from 1d to 4d** – to be taken away in the purchasers' own dishes.



At the end of Avebury Avenue (if you decide to follow it), you will come across Barden Road, and at the bottom of it lay the manor of Barden. **Barden Park House** and its estate were in the possession of the Abrey family during the latter part of the 19th century. During **the First World War** the house was occupied by the military authorities, and was used for the **confinement of captured German officer prisoners**. At the

conclusion of hostilities, the house and estate was purchased by Tonbridge Urban District Council and was used to build one of the first council estates.

At the outbreak of the war the **Kent scouts** were asked to work together to patrol the main roads and keep an eye on the telegraph system until the newly formed Special constables could take over. In 1914 the 1st scout troop had their **HQ at Barden house** with access for camping by the river. The Scouts supported VAD **Quarry Hill Hospital by acting as orderlies**. In March 1915 the Military moved into Barden House and the Scouts had to find alternative headquarters in **Waterloo Road**.

*“Arthur Smith b 1898 d 1915*

*Sapper Smith was attached to the Kent Fortress Royal Engineers, died of pneumonia in Rochester after having had an operation for appendicitis*

*He was buried with full military honours and the carriages were followed by a considerable body of soldiers and a troop of boy scouts. He is buried at Tonbridge cemetery. Arthur had been in the 1st Tonbridge Troop for nearly 6 years before joining up. He was described as a good scout and a popular fellow. (He was one of the youngest to die from Tonbridge age 17).”*

Across the High Street, opposite the Library, on the corner of High Street and Vale Road is the former **Angel Hotel**, which in 1915 accommodated a large number of men and officers.



## 18. Memorial Gardens



Follow Avebury Avenue, cross it in an appropriately safe place and turn right onto River Lawn Road, and then take a path walking towards the river and cross it. Follow the path until you reach Memorial Gardens on your right.

The current **Memorial Gardens** were built in 1952 to **replace the original Memorial** which had been demolished to allow road expansion at the bottom of Pembury Road. The new memorial wall incorporates the name of those who

fought in **the Great War and in World War Two.**

In 2014 a sculpture was added when this garden was renovated to mark the century of the start of the Great War. Entitled *The Torch*, it was designed during a project headed by Pam Mills with **local school children**, and built by Guy Portelli.

At the same time **the men** on the Memorial from the Great War were researched and the results, detailing all of the fallen, can be found on **Tonbridge Historical Society's website**, or in hard copy for research purposes at Tonbridge Library.

<http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/people/dead-of-ww1.html>

### **The Torch – be yours to forever hold high**

- designed by Ellie Baxter, the Poppy being held high by 5 rods representing fingers of a hand holding a torch, with the **Invicta horse design** by Nicole Smith and then look closely at the base depicting a **battlefield design** by Kasey Trow. As far as possible the mould was taken from **authenticated WW1 artefacts** such as an Officers boot, a WW1 tank, bullets, buttons and dog tags. It also represents **animals** used in the war look for the horse shoes, dog and pigeon prints. Inspired by In Flanders Fields.

<http://www.davidhodgkinsonphotography.com/tmbcmemorialmardens2016/sculpture.html>



## **19. Bradford Street**

Follow the path outside the Memorial Gardens wall until you reach Bradford Street.

The **Star Picture Hall** in **Bradford Street** advertised the '**Battle of the Somme**' War Office film in October 1916. This was the first time that civilians saw the reality of battle and many went to see the film hoping for a glimpse of a loved one.

Although reports of artillery fire together with vibrations could be heard in the town during the summer of 1916, the authorities tried to pass it off as gun testing at Woolwich.



## **20. River Medway and High Street**

Follow River Walk until it takes to the High Street along the other sleeve of the river Medway.

Commercial traffic on the **River Medway** had been in gradual decline in the years leading up to the War. Cargoes of timber, paper, hops, bricks and other goods continued to play an important part in the commerce of the town, but other elements grew in importance. One of the main users of the river was the **Baltic Saw Mills Company**, whose premises fronted the river. In September 1914, it was reported in the *Kent and Sussex Courier*, that "*The Baltic Saw Mills last week announced their intention of **paying to any employee who enlisted in Lord Kitchener's Army 25 per cent of his wages**, and also that his place would be kept open for him. ... all the married employees who enlisted would receive 6s a week in addition to the 25 per cent of their wages, for the ensuing six months. If the war lasted longer than that period, then the question of allowance would have to be reconsidered.* These provisions were no doubt prompted by the then widely held view that *it'll be all over by Christmas!*"

The river also played its part in **Army training** as the war progressed.



And its peace time use still continued for Venetian fetes throughout the war.



**High Street:** The Blue Cross procession proceeding down the High Street in January 1915. The **Blue Cross** (founded in 1897) cared for sick and injured **horses during the First World War, raising funds from donations.** The organisation also sent veterinary supplies to over 3,500 Army units around the world to treat **sick horses.** For more information visit <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/blue-cross-world-war-one-collection>



### Peace celebrations

On **11<sup>th</sup> November 1918** the news of the Armistice first reached Tonbridge when a notice was posted up in the windows of the **Tonbridge Free Press.** The town exploded with flags and bunting, the bells of the parish church rang, and a **quickly arranged procession** including the band of the Buffs, the local clergy, the Fire Brigade and School Cadet Corps, together with a mass of people and vehicles, made its way down the High Street. **The shops and houses, previously forbidden to show their full lights, now blazed with every lamp they had,** and there was even a firework display.



The peace was not signed until mid-June 1919 and it was on **19<sup>th</sup> July 1919** that the town was officially "en fete" with a children's procession, cinema shows, a fly past by aeroplanes and sweets all round.





# North Tonbridge Trail

Approximately 1.5 miles (2.5 km)

## 1. London Road

Start in London Road.

**Sandycombe's 85 London Road** is where the Royal Army Medical Corps was stationed.

789TON Courtesy Tonbridge School



731TON Courtesy Pam Mills

**Private Arthur Carter** 2/4 Buffs died here of pneumonia 12<sup>th</sup> January 1916 according to Tonbridge Free press. He was given a **full military funeral** attended by a full muster of officers, men and two bands. Private Carter, from Canterbury, had only been in the Army for 7 months and had become very popular with his comrades. He was buried at Tonbridge cemetery.

Source: <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/369786/CARTER,%20ARTHUR%20J>



790TON Courtesy Private Collector DA



791TON Courtesy Private Collector DA

## 2. 24 Dry Hill Road



Walk back to the fork junction with Dry Hill Road, turn left and walk up the hill to Dry Hill Park Crescent.

Henry Palin

In 1911 **Brita Palin**, widow of the Rev. Edward Palin, came to live at 24 Dry Hill Road in Tonbridge. At about the same time, her son, **Henry William Bourne**



**Palin**, emigrated to New Zealand. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, Henry enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Canterbury Regiment, **New Zealand Expeditionary Force**. He served in the **Gallipoli campaign**, was promoted to Lance Corporal, and then fought on the Western Front. He was killed in action on **27<sup>th</sup> September 1916** during the Battle of the Somme, initially being posted missing in action, but later confirmed as killed. He has no known grave; his name is on the town's war memorial. He was the great uncle of Michael Palin, who, in 2008, presented a BBC *Timewatch* programme about the last day of the war. This prompted him to ask the programme researchers if they could help him find out anything about his great uncle. In addition to the details of his service outlined above, the following eye witness account was found:

*On 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. L/Cpl Palin and myself were in the same shell hole just before the taking of Gird Trench. Palin was just getting up to fire when he was hit through the head. I was next to him and am sure he was killed outright. [Sgt Grindley]*

**Mary Palin**, Henry's sister was a VAD volunteer at Quarry Hill House. She helped with housework and as a Quarter-Master's Orderly from 14<sup>th</sup> October 1914 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 1919 assisting with the stores and ensuring that supplies were ordered.

Surname	Palin	Rec'd 12 JUN 1918	V.O. 8. K. 44
Christian Names	Mary	(Miss, Mrs or Miss)	
Permanent Address:	St. Helens		
	Tonbridge		
Date of Engagement	14. 10. 14	Rank	Member
Date of Termination	28. 2. 19	Rank	4
Particulars of Duties	House-work.	Asst. Quarter-Master's Orderly	
Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours served			6600 hrs.
Previous engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where			
Honours awarded			

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/>

### 3. St Saviour's Church, Dry Hill Park Crescent

Follow Dry Hill Park Crescent until you reach St Saviour's Church.

**The Mission**, attached to the Church, became the **National Food Kitchen** for North Tonbridge where people could buy **reasonably priced dinners**. The food was kept to the same price to help families who were struggling with **constantly rising prices** and shortages. All families had to do was supply their own crockery. The kitchen was open from **11.45am to 1.15pm** Monday to Friday.



There are several **memorial plaques** relating to Fallen to be seen in the church. The men commemorated are listed below.

From the St Saviour's Church, Tonbridge website:

*In 1919 the Reverend John and Mrs Le Fleming gave a sanctuary prayer desk in memory of their son Lawrence who had been baptised in the church and was killed in action in 1918.*

**Arthur Worsley Blackden**

**Eric James K Buckley**

**John Thelwal Peake**

**Michael Topham**

St Saviour's is only open regularly for 10am Sunday services, 9.30-11.30am and Coffee Break on Mondays, 10.30am-11.30am. Access by prior arrangement is also possible. Please check the website of the Church.

### 4. Tonbridge Cemetery

Walking back to Shipbourne Road and heading in a northerly direction we reach Welland Road and Tonbridge Cemetery.

Enter through the gate and go past the chapel. There are several **WW1 graves in the cemetery**, which are organised by year of death. It is also a place of rest of a Belgian soldier **Lodewijk (Louis) Marx**, who died in November 1914 and was given a full military funeral.



#### Facts about the part Tonbridge played in the war

Belgian Soldier Laid to Rest

**Lodewijk (Louis) Marx** died in November 1914. He had come to Tonbridge, with other wounded Belgian soldiers, after the **Battle of Antwerp**. He received treatment along with his comrades at **Tonbridge School Sanatorium** before being moved to the VAD Hospital at Quarry Hill. He died of kidney failure and was given a full military funeral with his coffin being draped with the flag of Belgium.

Every effort has been made to trace the family of Lodewijk Marx, but to no avail.



The first Tonbridge man known to have given his life was:

**Private Philip Hobden** (RWK Regt.) Death recorded as 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1914.

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment was part of the BEF and took part in the Battle of Mons, the German III Korps **were attacking the canal line** at Mariette and Tertre, the part of the line held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion RWK. The Battalion was forced to withdraw across the canal. **Private Hobden** is buried at Hautrage Military Cemetery.

## 5. Cage Farm Meadow

Turning out of the cemetery at the north gate passed the WW2 graves, turn right and go up the hill towards the mini roundabout and opposite you will see The Ridgeway.

**Harold Johnson** a pilot in the First World War, this is his story.

**Harold Richard Johnson** was born in Tonbridge in 1889, the youngest son of William and Isabel. He went to **Judd School**. In 1901 he lived at 124 Pembury Road but by 1911 he was living at Fulwich Road, Dartford and working as a telegraph linesman for the South Eastern and Chatham railway. On 11th December 1913 he obtained his **aviator's certificate** on a Caudron biplane at Hendon and was one of the first aviators to alight at Tonbridge, at **Cage Farm Meadow**, along with **Mr. F Godden**. He joined the **Royal Flying Corps** 3rd squadron as a Lieutenant and when he was posted to France he flew over Tonbridge en route and **circled the town several times** before he carried on with his flight. On **19th January 1916 his plane crashed in high winds**, killing him instantly. He is buried at Lapugnoy Military cemetery. There does not appear to have been any further use of Cage Green Meadows by aircraft.



795TON Source Tonbridge Free Press



The Western Mail dated January 31, 2017 reported of the death of **Frank Godden** as follows:

*'The Aldershot coroner held inquest on Tuesday on two airmen who lost their lives in separate accidents. The first inquiry concerned Major Frank Godden (25), Royal Flying Corps. Evidence was given that on Sunday morning he was flying a new type of machine which had not been used by anyone but himself, **when one of the wings what seemed to break away**, and from a height of about 1,000ft. The machine fell headlong to the ground, deceased receiving terrible injuries which must have caused instant death. The*

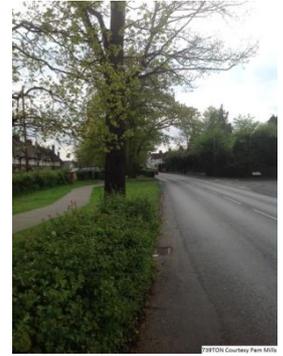
*machines was closely inspected both by expert mechanics and the deceased before the night. The jury returned a verdict of "Death by accident".'*

The death of both of these pilots in accidents demonstrates the statistic that **more airmen were lost to accidents than** in actual combat.

## 6. Shipbourne Road

You are now in Shipbourne Road. Follow the road back into town.

Men from this area served their country. There were at least 11 homes from where men lost their lives. Refer to [Tonbridge Historical Society](http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/people/dead-of-ww1.html) website for further details. <http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/people/dead-of-ww1.html>



## 7. Rowan Mews



Keep walking along Shipbourne Road back into town. Turn left into Dernier Road. Go to the T junction and turn right and on your left you will see Rowan Mews; walk a few metres towards the houses and your right you will see a memorial stone which says that this was the location of **Tonbridge School Sanatorium**

List of Belgian soldiers sent to "The Wounded Allies' Relief Committee", currently in the care of the Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment, Tonbridge, 23 October 1914

Liste des militaires belges envoyés à "The Wounded Allies' Relief Committee," actuellement confiés aux soins du Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment, Tonbridge, 23 octobre 1914.

Acaert, Hector, 2 Grenadiers.
Andries, François, 3 Chass.-à-pied.
Bary, Arsène, 2 Ligne.
Banneau, Camille, 25 Ligne.
Brouwers, Guillaume, 1 Grenadiers.
Brens, Jean Baptiste, 2 Chasseurs.
Chatelain, Louis, 9 Ligne.
Cordier, Léon, 27 Ligne.
Charlier, René, 2 Ligne.
Delvigne, Louis, Ser. fourrier, 11 Le.
Demuyne, Cyrille, 1 Husiers lourds.
De Buschere, Julien, 3 Ligne.
Demaunin, Octave, 9 Ligne.
De Maetelaere, Julien, 25 Ligne.
Deville, Jean Baptiste, Carab. Cycliste.
De Troyer, Pierre, 1 Grenadiers.
Demeyer, Veiry, Cycliste.
Deguidt, Louis Cornelius, Artillerie.
De Jonghe, Georges, 6 Chass.-à-pied.
Dumont, Félicien, 1 Chass.-à-cheval.
Everard, Lambert, Ser. Maj., 14 Ligne.
Godaux, Désiré, 4 Ligne.
Garcel, Joseph, Infanterie.
Haers, Louis, 1 Ligne.
Joly, René, 5 Ligne.
Kin, Henri, 4 Ligne.
Lere, Geyso, 2 Ligne.
Landrieu, Gustave, 3 Chass.-à-pied.
Loomans, Pierre Jacques, 10 Ligne.
Marx, Louis, Carabiniers.
Renier, Gaston, 3 Chass.-à-pied.
Robbins, Jean Baptiste, 2 Chass.-à-pied.
Robin, Emile, 27 Ligne.
Raeymaekers, Victor, 7 Ligne.
Sifronx, Henri, Cap., 1 Ligne.
Seys, Rémi, 3 Chass. à pied.
Seghers, Richard, 4 Ligne.
Sauvage, Henri Jean-Baptiste, 2 Carab.
Van Wesemael, Pierre, 6 Ligne.
Vanden Rul, Jean, 10 Ligne.
Van de Castelle, Cyrille, 2 Ligne.
Van Damme, Florent, 12 Ligne.
Vermassen, Léon, 1 Carab.
Vanhoenecker, Polydore, 2 Ligne.
Verhaeghe, Jules, 6 Ligne.
Wattiez, Hector, 2 Chass. à pied.
Wymeels, Oscar, 12 Ligne.

From *L'Indépendance belge* newspaper, 20 November 1914  
Source: [www.netarchief.be](http://www.netarchief.be)

in WW1.

The headmaster of Tonbridge school, Mr Lowry, alert to the situation in Belgium, placed the school sanatorium at the disposal of **The Red Cross** who staffed the Sanatorium along with other medical officers anticipating arrival of the injured.

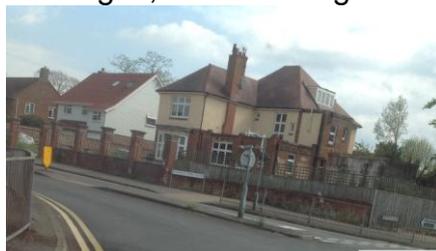


On 16th October 1914, a special train arrived at Tonbridge station carrying a large party of injured **Belgian soldiers** who were transported by car and ambulance to the Sanatorium. When the **VAD hospital opened in Quarry Hill**, a few days later, it received a transfer of 45 of the injured men from the sanatorium.

## 8. 5 Yardley Park Road

Return to Shipbourne Road, turn right and follow the road back to town centre, until you reach the junction with Yardley Park Road.

The home of **Miss Kathleen Dodd**, who served in the VAD as a Quartermaster's Orderly at Quarry Hill House in Tonbridge. Her voluntary duties would have included attending to all the stores which were sent from the **Central Workrooms in London**. The Central Workrooms themselves were supplied by groups of volunteer workers spread out all around Great Britain making nightwear, bandages, and dressings.



797TON Courtesy Park Mills

Surname	Dodd	V.A.D. K. 46
Christian Name	Kathleen	(residence 110)
Permanent Address	5 Yardley Park Tonbridge	
Date of Engagement	27. 2. 17	Rank Quartermaster
Date of Termination	27. 12. 19	Rank
Particulars of Duties	House-work	sent quarter-master's orderly
Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours worked		27 hrs
Previous engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where		
Honours awarded		

797TON Courtesy Red Cross

<http://www.scarletfinders.co.uk>

## 9. Ashburnham Road

Following Shipbourne Road back to town centre, you will see Ashburnham Road on the right on the opposite side of the road.

Margaret Lloyd and Amy Anderson lived in this road. **Miss Lloyd** helped Quarry Hill House V.A.D. Hospital with housework for more than 4 years.



Surname	Lloyd	V.A.D. No. 44	3 JUN 1918
Christian Names	Margaret	(Miss)	
Permanent Address	7 Ashburnham Rd, Tonbridge		
Date of Engagement	16.10.16	Rank	Member
Date of Termination	28.2.19	Rank	
Particulars of Duties	House-work		
Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours served	# 220 hrs.		
Previous engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where			
Honours awarded			

**Mrs Anderson** worked in Hospital Supplies work depot, distributing supplies to the hospitals and wounded soldiers.

Surname	Anderson	V.A.D. No. 44	SEP 1918
Christian Names	Mrs Amy Christina	(Mrs. employed)	
Permanent Address	11 Ashburnham Rd, Tonbridge		
Date of Engagement	1/9/16	Rank	
Date of Termination	1/9/18	Rank	
Particulars of Duties	Hosp. Supp. Depot worker		
Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours served	241		
Previous Engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where			
Honours awarded			

## 10. George and Dragon Pub

Keep following Shipbourne Road until you reach George and Dragon Pub, the final destination of this trail.

**George and Dragon** was one of the locations where the soldiers; who passed through Tonbridge on their way to the Front; were billeted. At times there were up to **100 men billeted** in this hotel.

An excerpt from the newspaper at the time shows the attitude of the people in Tonbridge to the soldiers who were billeted.



*It is a somewhat curious fact that a number of people who were perfectly willing to take soldiers and indeed were expecting to be asked were overlooked whilst others who had very little accommodation became inconveniently overcrowded.*

*But it is safe to say that there was **no house in Tonbridge where the soldiers were unwelcome guests**, for besides the fact that they were doing their bit in entertaining the men, the townspeople knew from previous experience that in the conduct of their military friends they would find no excuse for complaint, whilst their irresistible spirits rendered them the most enlivening of companions.*

# South Tonbridge Trail

## Approximately 1 miles (1.8 km)

### 1. Pembury Road, the Original War Memorial



760TON Courtesy Tonbridge Historical Society

Start at a mini roundabout, the junction with Quarry Hill, opposite St Stephen's Church.

The roundabout off **Quarry Hill** was the location of the first memorial dedicated to the Fallen of WW1, unveiled in 1921. It recorded over **300 names** inscribed on 4 tablets.

It was 16 foot high, made of local sandstone with tablets of Sicilian marble.



745TON Courtesy Pam Mills

**St Stephen's girls school** situated next to the Alms houses in Pembury Road, (since become Hillview) sent **knitted socks and mittens** to the soldiers on the Front.

From the press: *"The girls of St Stephen's School yesterday handed over to Miss Watts, to be despatched to our troops abroad, the magnificent gift of 66 pairs of socks. As they provided the wool out of their own pocket-money, it will be easily seen that this is no meagre gift, and speaks well for the self-sacrificing spirit of the girls."*



746TON Courtesy Pam Mills

### Police station

From the meeting minutes dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 1915 it becomes clear that one of the tasks of the Superintendent in Tonbridge was to **make arrangements with the Council for an audible signal, when given**, would mean that **enemy aircraft** were in the County and that 'the inhabitants must seek shelter in the cellars or basements of houses and buildings'.



803TON Courtesy Adrian Allen

The Chief Constable further asked that arrangements should be made for the usual fire signal to be sounded. **The Special Constables** would proceed at once to the local Police Station to assist the firemen should the aircraft drop **incendiary bombs**, and to carry out any other duty which might be required of them.

There are no **recorded incidents of enemy bombs** falling on Tonbridge in the Great War; although sightings of Zeppelins were reported from Tunbridge Wells.

## 2. Tonbridge Hospital

Cross over the mini roundabout heading south (and uphill) for about 200 metres. You will find Baltic Road and, now, some charming flats.

**Baltic Road** was the site of the first hospital, which helped to treat the injured soldiers in WW1. The area behind the hospital but quite a distance away was known as **Bloodshots** and used for training soldiers on trench war fare.

The hospital was opened in 1902 and called Queen Victoria Cottage Hospital (which moved to the current site of Tonbridge Cottage Hospital in 1935). During WW1 it proved very useful, helping to treat the injured soldiers and **providing use of the operating room** and being just across the road from the VAD hospital. The **X-ray machine** was presented by Sir David Salamon (Salamons of Southborough) in 1914 and proved vital in diagnosis.



A report in the Kent & Sussex Courier on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1916 highlights the use of **Bloodshots** as marked on the map below and the **dangers** to troops even when not on the Front Line.

**“BOMBING FATALITY AT TONBRIDGE. SOLDIER'S SAD END. THE INQUEST.**

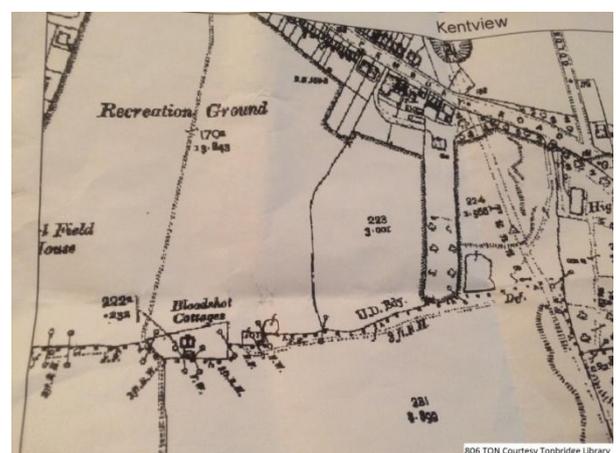


*A distressing fatality to a Private in the East Surrey Regiment, Arthur William Lawrence, which occurred at Tonbridge on Wednesday **during bombing practice**, was inquired into by the Coroner (Mr. Thos. Buss) at the Fire Station, Tonbridge, on Friday morning. The deceased, it appeared, threw a **live bomb**, when it **struck the parapet and rebounded into the trench**. He was ordered by the officer to run for his life, but failed to do so, and received terrible injuries, to which he shortly afterwards succumbed.*

**Alfred Lawrence, of Easemore, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk**, blacksmith, father of the deceased, said his son was 28 years of age and was a single man. He had been in the Army since March last, and he last saw him alive about two months ago, when he returned home for a week-end.

The Coroner, in summing up, said everything appeared to have been carried on properly, and the orders were distinctly given by the officer in charge. **Had the deceased run for his life when ordered to he no doubt would have escaped with his life.**

The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and expressed sympathy with the relatives of the deceased, the Foreman stating that they recognised he was doing his duty to his country at the time. The Jury also exonerated the officer from all blame. He did all he possibly could to save the deceased from the accident. Major Strand, as one of the senior officers, on behalf of the other officers, N C.O.'s and men, expressed deepest sympathy with the relatives in the sad



accident, which had taken from them a dear one, and from the Army a promising soldier. The Coroner concurred, and said the deceased was doing his duty as nobly as if on the field of battle, and died for his King and Country”.

Source Tonbridge Library

### 3. Quarry Hill House VAD Hospital

So, on the opposite side of the road you will see the location of **Quarry Hill House**, (later became Fosse Bank School, now a housing estate).

Between October 1914 and February 1919, some **sixty or more of the town’s women volunteered to work at this VAD Hospital.** Some worked as nurses, others as cooks or domestics. Their details will be accessible through Tonbridge Historical Society webpage.



761TON Courtesy Tonbridge Historical Society



749TON Courtesy Pam Mills

During the War, regular ambulance trains came into Tonbridge Junction and the injured were taken to various VAD hospitals. **By 1916 over 500 injured soldiers had been treated.** The photo reproduced below shows stretcher bearer practice by the men of V.A.D. Kent 51 on the Castle lawn.



807TON Courtesy Private Collector DA

### 4. Judd School



750TON Courtesy Pam Mills

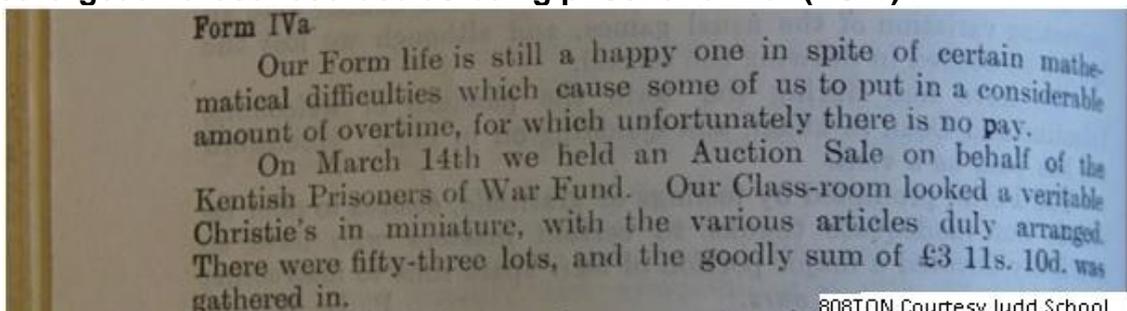
Walk back along Quarry Hill until you reach a roundabout. Turn left to Brook Street and follow it until you see Judd School.

**53 men from the school** lost their lives and there is a memorial in the school hall. Boys from this school also raised money for the prisoners of war fund.

The youngest to fall in combat

**Noel William Baker** born Dec 1897 in Penshurst attended the Judd School until 1913, is the youngest known combatant to die in conflict from Tonbridge, **age just 17yrs** old. He joined 7<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders’ on 14th May 1915 and on **25<sup>th</sup> September** at the Battle of Loos he was recorded as dead. He is remembered on the Loos Memorial as well as Judd School Roll of Honour.

**Let’s not forget all those recorded as being prisoner of war (POW)**



808TON Courtesy Judd School

As stated in the Courier July 19<sup>th</sup> 1918 a list of **POW's from Tonbridge** and surrounding areas housed in **German or Turkish Prisoner** of War camps. Some of those named never returned home and died a prisoner. Tonbridge POW committee of whom Edward le May was honorary secretary, was the first to send **parcels including food to the prisoners**. He produced the list of 53 names for publication as at July 1918 for the newspaper.

Royal West Kent Regt.

J. Hope, K.C Harris, T.R Bellingham, W.F Young, J. Coulstock, E.G Peacock, P. Barton, C. Verrinder, G. Gardiner, A. Bowles, J.M Thomas, G. Field, H. Leigh, W.H Godden, G. Langridge, W.F Gunter, F.B Seabrook, E. Card, J. Hart, A.P Clarke, J.T Wilkins, E. Smith, F.G Thomas, R. Baker, J. Peckham, H. Parr, W. Little, H. Nuttall, G. Hill, C.W Hicks, C. Smith.

Bufs-East Kent Regt

C. Wathing, J.W Smith, A. Bull, D. Cox, T.A Taylor, A. Warman, P. Johnson, A. Linsell, T. Kemp, C.H Lodge, W. Smith, W. Cook, F.H Mustell, C.E Howell, Sgt ? Colthup.

Kent Fortress Regt

Hy. Smith, H. Barton, H.Killick, F.A Sayer, W. Bellchamber, P.C Norton

Rifle Brigade

H.J Bathurst.

Mrs Blanche Evans was the wife of the head teacher from **Judd School**, Mr John Evans (1908-1928). She served as an unpaid **assistant nurse in** Quarry Hill V.A.D. Hospital from 14.10.1914 to 28.02.1919.

V.A.D. R. 46  
Recd 2 JUN 1919  
Mrs. (continued)  
Surname: Evans  
Christian Names: Blanche  
Permanent Address: Judd School, Tonbridge  
Date of Engagement: 14.10.14 Rank: Assistant Nurse Pay:  
Date of Termination: 28.2.19 Rank: Asst Nurse Pay:  
Particulars of Duties: Wards: Surgical & Medical - Theatre  
Whether whole or part time, and if latter No. of hours served: 8950  
Previous engagements under Joint War Committee, if any, and where:  
Honours awarded:  
809TON Courtesy Red Cross

**5. St Stephen's Church**



Walk back along Brook Street, then rejoin Quarry Hill and follow it until the turn to Waterloo Road. Follow the road until you reach St Stephen's Church.

**The Church** has a war memorial on the wall inside.

**Annie Chapman**; whose address was the Vicarage; served as a VAD nurse at Harefield Australian hospital.

In other parts of the county vicarages were used as accomodation for **VAD nurses** who were away from home or those from overseas.



## 6. Meadow Lawn

Follow Waterloo Road, then turn left to Douglas Road and then left again onto Meadow Road, the final destination of this trail.

**Meadow lawn** is the estate behind the church, whose residents formed a committee to raise funds to assist **the Belgian refugees**, who were living in Tonbridge during the War.



From the report of the Tonbridge War Committee, **January 1917**, it becomes clear that the number of refugees had dropped as some were relocated with other refugees to London or surrounding areas, or they moved on their own accord for work. **Some heads of families had been called back to Belgium** by their Government leaving their families behind. However, at the time of the report there were still over **100 refugees residing in Tonbridge**. And by October 1917 the Meadow Lawn residents had raised £219 3s 7d to assist with the welfare.

Monsieur Robinet, one of the first Belgian refugees who became a well-known character in the town, passed away in 1916; his body, encased in lead, was placed in safe keeping at the Castle before being removed to the family vault in Belgium. **His wife remained at 6, Meadow Road with the family until 1919** and was taken care of by way of subscriptions and donations from the Meadow Lawn residents committee, (her son-in-law Mons. Fosty, who was working at Letchworth, was also sending her money). When the family finally left in April 1919, they were sent on their way with presents donated by the **residents of Meadow Lawn**.

## Other points of interest

- **Cricket in Tonbridge**



The area of Sainsbury's car park in Angel Lane was the cricket ground. (Home to Kent County Cricket Club Nursery).

Sport, and cricket in particular, played an important part in the lives of Tonbridge men from the Victorian period onwards. Many of the young men who served in the War had played for one or more cricket teams that held regular matches in the town. Whitefriars and Truscott Press had their works teams, as did other firms, and there were numerous clubs. Several of the town's families were engaged in the

manufacture of cricket equipment, cricket balls in particular.

The photo below shows Woolley (left, standing) & Blythe (right, seated) before they went off to serve in the Great War.



- **St Eanswythe Mission in Priory Road**

The Mission was set up by Mary Gorham for bible classes for women after the coming of the railway. She used this space wisely during WW1 providing comfort to wounded servicemen. She also provided convalescent care.

Wounded soldiers entertained at St Eanswythe Mission



- **Miss Margaret Waite**, born 1894 in Tonbridge, was one of three nurses [First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps] who were honoured by the King of the Belgians for their bravery under shell fire whilst rescuing wounded men from the front line trenches, not far from Oostkerke in April 1915. They were initially allowed by an officer to go forward, but as the Germans began shelling the area, they were ordered back. They ignored the order and attended the wounded in the trenches and then accompanied them back to safety.



- **Christmas puddings for the troops**

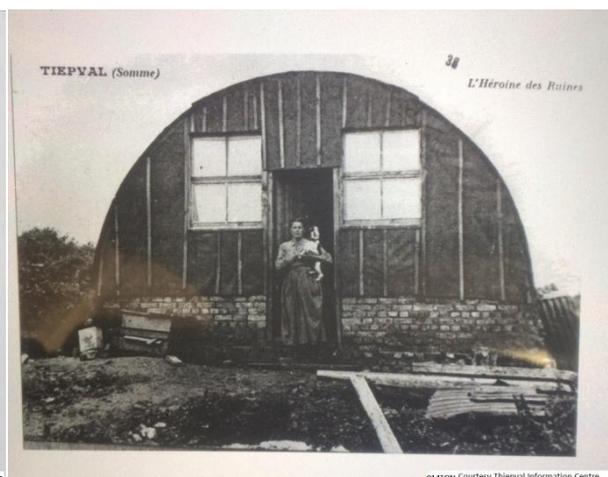
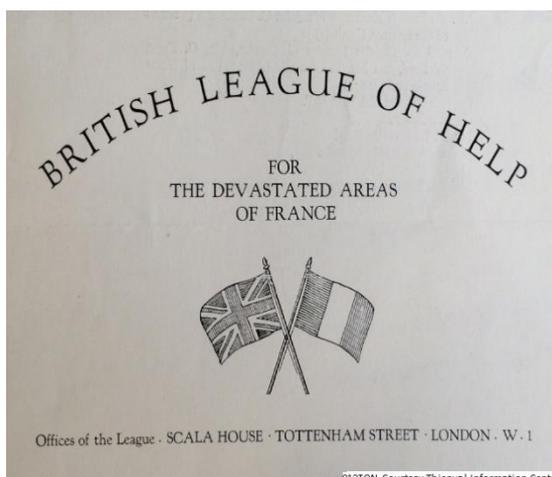
*'We have now closed our Shilling Fund to provide Christmas puddings for Kentish soldiers at the front, and ... the magnificent total of 1,754 shillings has been subscribed by readers of the 'Free Press'. Most heartily do we than every subscriber on behalf of those whose Christmas Day will be brightened by the result of their generosity ... Kentish Tommies will be deeply grateful soldiers that they are not forgotten. ... It is a great relief to learn that the Bessel specially set apart by the War Office to convey the Christmas puddings to France and Flanders has safely arrived at its destination.'*

From the *Tonbridge Free Press*, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1916. Tonbridge's contribution was part of a national effort to ensure every officer and man in the British Expeditionary Force received a portion of Plum-pudding on Christmas Day.

- **Tonbridge adopts Thiepval**

In 1921 the League of Help, a national organisation, encouraged towns to twin with French villages affected by the war. Tonbridge adopted Thiepval in the heart of the Somme, which had been all but destroyed. A committee was formed, events planned and money raised that was sent over to assist in the rebuilding of the village.

We know from research that it was put to reconnecting the water supply; local Tonbridge farmers were also approached to supply farming equipment and animals to start the community again. The current village of Thiepval now has a population of over 100 persons.



At the end of the war, the men began to return from the services. Demobilisation took some time, and most men did not come home until well into 1919. The people of Tonbridge officially greeted the returning men with a certificate of thanks, like this one given to Frederick Chalklin. Those who returned had, in many cases, lost friends and family members; some were themselves injured in body or mind or both. Their lives and those of their families had been changed forever by the experience of war. That world conflict, followed in a generation by another, created the present day world in which we live and so continues to shape our lives today.



816TON Courtesy Lynne Chalklin

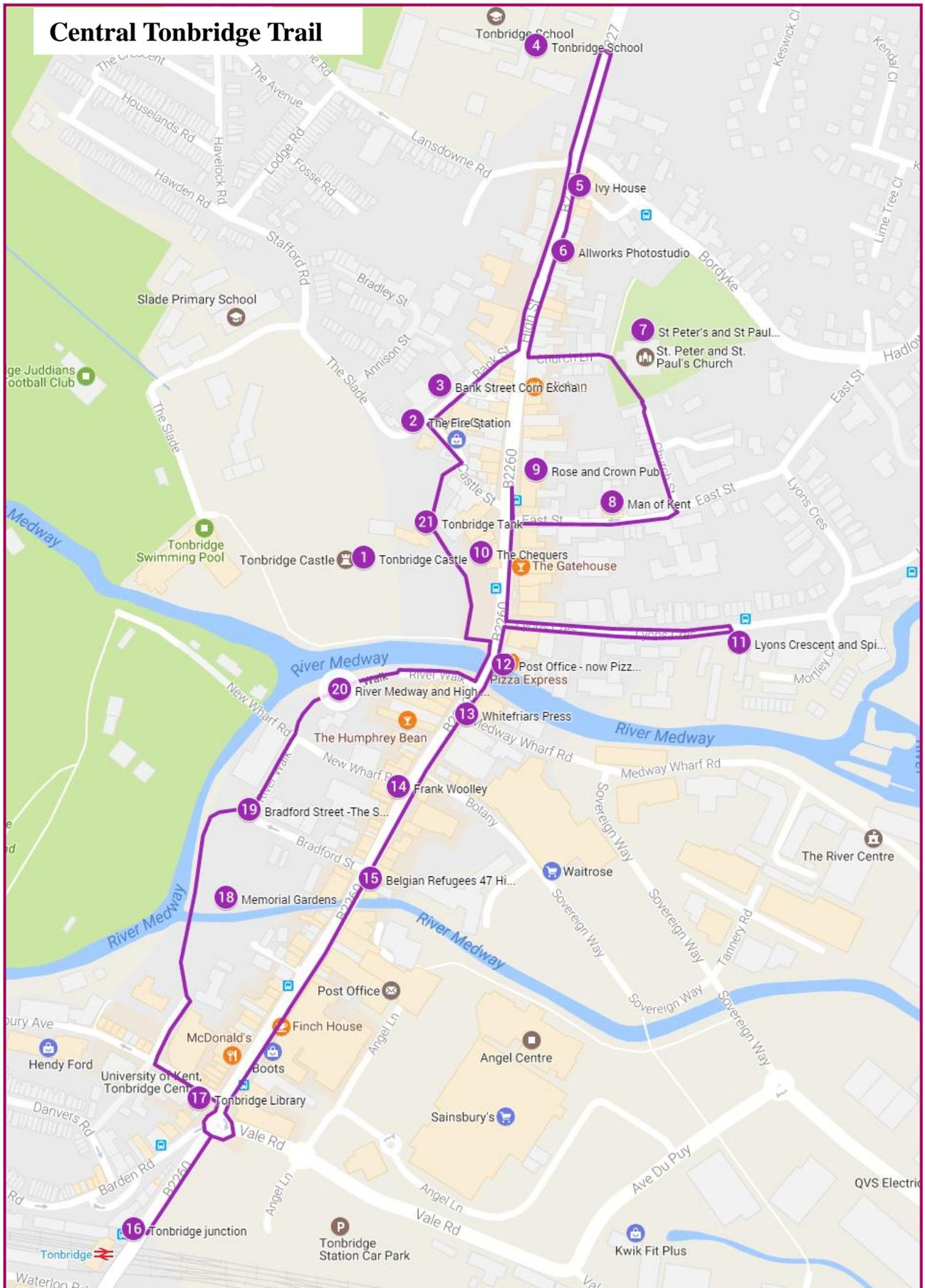
## Central Tonbridge Trail Quiz

1. The Corn Exchange became the Public Hall where they gave concerts for the soldiers based in Tonbridge.	True/False
2. 415 alumni from Tonbridge School were killed in action during the course of the War.	True/False
3. The Inn sign of the Man of Kent Pub used to feature Lord Kitchener.	True/False
4. Frank Woolley, the famous cricketer, enlisted in the Lincoln Yeomanry in 1916.	True/False
5. Railway was very important. Ambulance trains arrived at all times of day and night.	True/False
6. A librarian Henry Spickett was awarded the Military Medal.	True/False
7. The original memorial dedicated to the Fallen and unveiled in 1921, does not exist anymore. It was replaced by the Memorial Gardens, which were created in 1952.	True/False
8. Tonbridge was home to Belgian refugees.	True/False
9. Tonbridge War Refugees Committee was set up on September 23 <sup>rd</sup> 1917.	True/False
10. Tonbridge was presented with a tank in 1919 and it was displayed in front of the Castle.	True/False

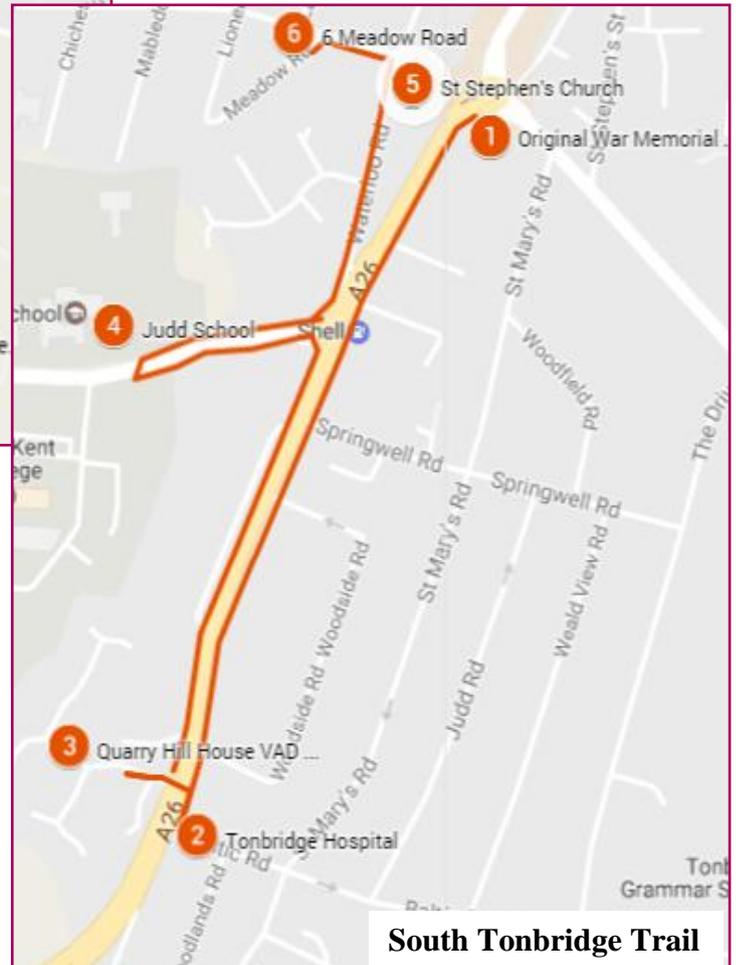
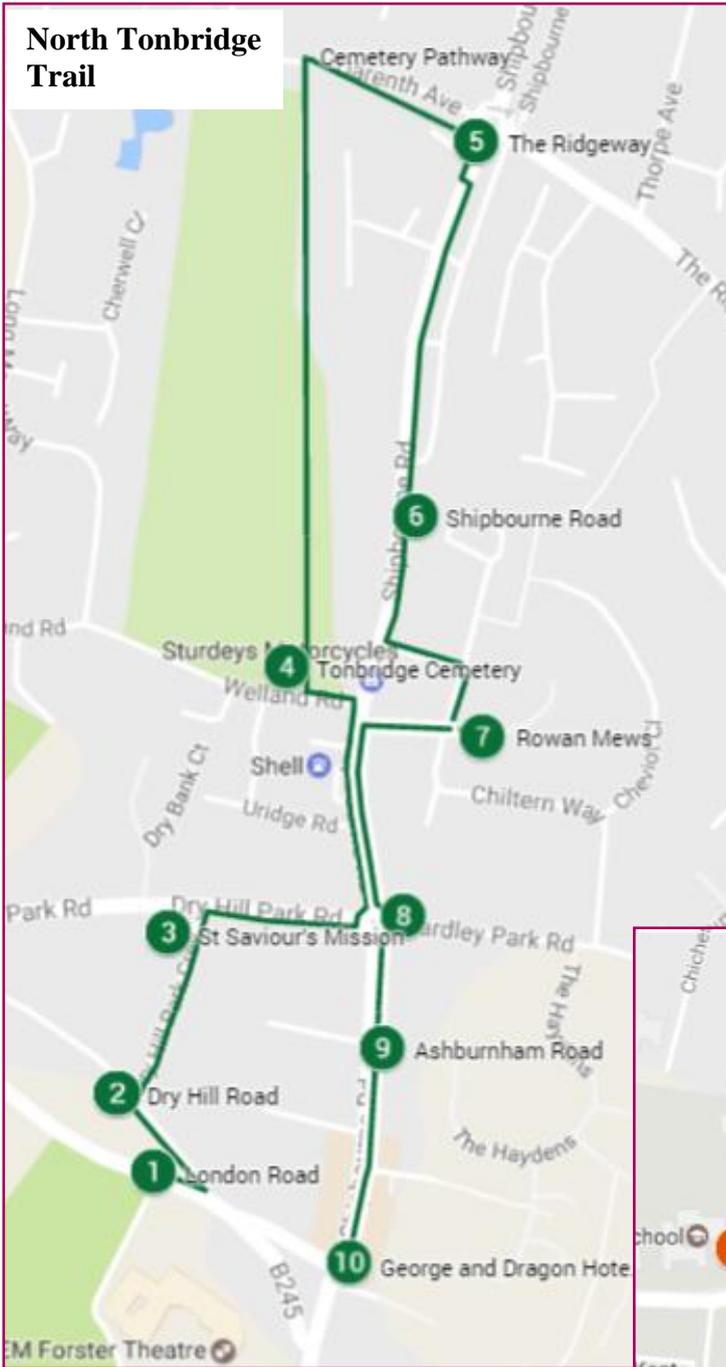
**When you have completed the quiz don't forget to send your answers to [info@kentww1.com](mailto:info@kentww1.com) to receive your certificate.**

**If you have enjoyed following this trail visit our website [www.kentww1.com](http://www.kentww1.com) and discover more Kentish trails on the 100 miles tab- by December 2017 there will be 30 to follow around Kent.**

# Route of WW1 Tonbridge Trail



## North Tonbridge Trail



## South Tonbridge Trail