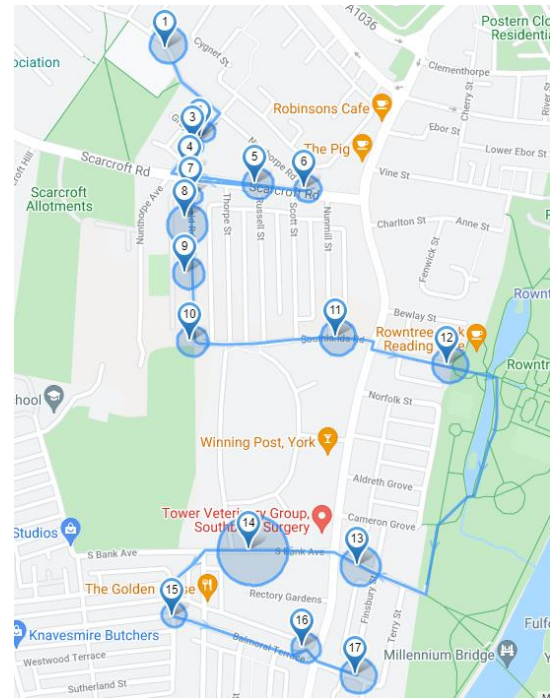




**Soldiers and Zeppelins
WW1 in South Bank, York**



This walk should take about an hour to an hour and a half. We invite you to think about how World War 1 impacted upon our area of York, South Bank.

This is a linear walk, which starts outside Clements Hall on Nunthorpe Road. It finishes at Beresford Terrace, off Bishopthorpe Road, where it is a short walk to the shops and cafes on Bishopthorpe Road

There is a bus route along Bishopthorpe Road and a number 11 or 26 bus will take you to and from the city centre.

There are benches at various places, and the walk is suitable for wheelchair users.

Clements Hall History Group received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2016, and much of what you will hear on this walk is as result of that generously funded project. Our WW1 project finished in 2017, but the results of our research are available on our website, at www.clementsallhistorygroup.org.uk

Start the walk on Nunthorpe Road outside Clements Hall.

Scarcroft School

Scarcroft School opened in 1896, and by the time of WW1 there were 1200 pupils here, three times the number today. It also hosted the largest evening school in the city.

School log books for the wartime period were kept by the then Headmaster, Mr Morrell. We discovered in the school archives and found them illuminating, as the school was at the centre of much wartime activity.

The military requisitioned the school twice – soldiers were billeted there for two periods between December 1914 and the winter of 1916, while they completed their training on the Knavesmire. Apparently substantial damage was caused during their stay and troops had a weekly sum docked from their pay to cover replacement costs.

The school also closed around Christmas 1914, to be used by the post office to process the many extra parcels and letters being sent out to the troops already abroad.

This disruption to the children's education must have been a logistical nightmare for the staff, as places had to be found to accommodate them at various other schools around the city. This often meant much longer journeys and only half-day classes.

The children were integrated into the war effort in various ways. Plays were performed to raise money to send parcels of food and clothing to the troops. Allotments were created on Scarcroft Green to meet food shortages. Huge numbers of conkers were collected, in response to a national appeal, as it was thought they could be used to make cordite, an ingredient for making explosives. Unfortunately this turned out not to be efficient and piles of conkers were just left to rot.

Scarcroft children also contributed the then huge sum of £400 to the war effort, by buying war savings certificates.

In the upper hall there is a memorial commemorating 65 former pupils and one teacher killed in the war. In September 1914 the teacher, Edward Hawthorne, was appointed Head of a temporary scout school set up in another part of the city. There boys, some of them from Scarcroft School, were trained to help the military by carrying messages, guarding railway lines, performing coastguard duty and helping out at harvest time while also continuing their education.

Edward Hawthorne later enlisted and was attached to a Royal Navy medical unit. He served in Gallipoli, in modern day Turkey, from where he wrote to his son John, a pupil teacher at Scarcroft: 'if you can invent a decent fly catcher guaranteed to catch millions at once we shall all be grateful'.

He also sent back from there his enamel mug, complete with shrapnel holes. He then went on to serve in France, where he developed suspected meningitis. He was transported back to the England by hospital train and died in a military hospital in Bristol.

The other names on the memorial represent a cross section of the services involved in the war, from the fledgling RAF to the army and navy.

The school was affected when Spanish flu swept through York in 1918. According to the log book for the period on July 4th, a quarter of the children and three teachers were absent. The Medical Officer of Health ordered the school to be closed for five weeks, but by 22 October there were 200 cases, some fatal.

For more about Scarcroft School in wartime

see <http://www.clementshallhistorygroup.org.uk/projects/world-war-1/the-impact-of-the-war-on-scarcroft-school1/>

As you face Scarcroft School, with Clements Hall behind you, walk left, continuing up the street until you come to the corner shop on the right hand side - B-N-T Stores, a newsagent and general store. Turn right at this shop, past the pillar-box and continue along Upper Price Street to 9 Upper Price Street.

9 Upper Price St

At no 9 Upper Price St, James Bottomley lived with his wife and two sons during WW1. He was the manager of a gentleman's outfitters in Davygate, York. From his war records we know that he joined up quite late in May 1917, a year after conscription for married men came into force. He was a gunner in the Royal Artillery on the Western Front.

After the war he was awarded an army pension and was deemed to have a 20% disability, due to having been gassed near Acheux in France in June 1918. Two months later he also

injured his foot while unloading shells. He was one of the lucky ones to survive the war, but nevertheless he was permanently affected by his war time experiences. James returned to his job as a gent's outfitter after the war.

Walk along a little further to no 13.

13 Upper Price St

James would still have been at home on the night of May 2nd 1916, when a Zeppelin attack completely destroyed no.13. It must have been terrifying, only two doors up.

The airship was piloted by Max Dietrich, who incidentally was the nephew of Marlene Dietrich, the famous German actress and singer. The occupants of number 13, George Avison, a retired railway worker, and his wife Sarah Ann, were both killed in their beds. The house was rebuilt - you can see that the brick feature above the front door differs from the house next door.

The Zeppelin had also bombed nearby Nunthorpe Avenue where 28-year-old Beatrice Chapman was killed and her mother and sister badly injured. They had rushed outside, attracted by the loud noise of the airship, and were awed by the sight of it overhead. The airship, 150 feet in length, was a few yards longer than the length of the nave in York Minster. The Zeppelin continued on its way and in just ten minutes a total of 18 bombs were dropped on York, killing 9 people and injuring 40.

As you walk to our next destination, reflect on how this area would have looked, smelt and sounded different in World War 1. There are now cars outside every house. Hardly anyone on the streets we are walking would have owned a car. In cooler weather, there would have been coal fires burning in the houses – no central heating – with a distinctive smell. Outside school hours there would have been the sounds of children playing, unaccompanied by parents, in the streets. Most of the houses we will pass were too small to accommodate all of a large family all of the time, and there was no electronic in-house entertainment.

With number 13 on your left, carry on up the street to the crossroads with Scarcroft Road. Turn left.

44 Scarcroft Rd

The role played by women in WW1 is often overlooked. As we pass 44 Scarcroft Road, think of Lucy Gertrude Brown, who lived here. She was mentioned in dispatches for her bravery during WW1 at a local hospital. Lucy was head cook at Nunthorpe VAD hospital, which we'll mention later. Lucy was a teacher in York before the start of WW1. Lives changed as a result of the war.

Continue along Scarcroft Road, and stop at the imposing Victorian brick built church.

St Clement's Church

The Reverend Argles was the first vicar of this church, in post during WW1 and a very influential local figure. Apart from saving people from the demon drink by obstructing the opening of public houses in the area, he also founded and partially funded St Clement's Elementary School, and instituted various clubs and organisations such as the Church Lad's Brigade, the Girls' Friendly Society, Mother's Union, Sports Clubs and a thriving

Sunday School. He was also a member of the York Citizen's Committee, set up to provide relief for hardship caused by the war, including after the Zeppelin raid.

His daughter Helen was Commandant at the Military Hospital in Clifford Street and was awarded the Royal Red Cross and the Honourable Serving Sister of the Order of St John medals after the war. Clifford Street Military Hospital was opened in 1915 and initially treated soldiers conveyed directly from front line fighting. It treated a total of 819 patients during WW1. Many extra staff were needed for the hospitals, and many women, those who could afford to volunteer and did not need to bring home a wage, filled this gap in medical personnel.

A memorial plaque inside St Clement's Church displays the names of over 150 local men and reminds us that not all casualties of the war were killed in action, some died in military hospitals back home, of disease or wounds.

George Henry Eden, for example, died of cardiac disease and nephritis in York in 1919, having been discharged from the West Yorkshire Regiment as medically unfit two years previously. Before being called up, he had been a dock labourer in Skeldergate. He died in York as a result of wounds and trench fever. Trench fever is contracted from the faeces of lice.

The memorials also remind us of the extensive reach of the war – local men and women served in Egypt, Greece, Palestine and Mesopotamia (present day Iraq). Arthur Birch, who is on the memorial, served in present-day Turkey, Egypt and France from 1915 till his death in 1919. John Wilson Howie, died of appendicitis in Bulgaria in 1919. Frank Ward died in Basrah of pneumonia. Conditions for sick and wounded men overseas were often horrific.

Continue walking past the church towards York Carpet and Bedding Shop on your left.

No 14 Scarcroft Road, York Carpet and Bedding Shop

During the First World War these premises were Walter Seymour's hardware, glass and china shop. Bertram Seymour lived here with his father Walter and family, and will have had cause to thank the passing of the Defence of the Realm Act in 1914. This Act curbed many freedoms that were deemed risky to the war effort. The one that affected Bertram would have been suspension of the ringing of church bells. He would have been spared the rather tinny sound of St Clements Church bells waking him from his slumbers every Sunday.

Bertram joined up in 1915 and became a commissioned officer in 1916. He served with the Heavy Machine Gun Corps, probably crewing a tank. He died at Passchendaele on 31 July 1917 and left a wife, Loris, and a son Bertram.

Cross over Scarcroft Road and walk back, passing Scott Street, Russell St and Thorpe Street on your left, then turn next left up Millfield Road.

As you walk back spare a thought for Walter Langstaffe who lived at 36 Scarcroft Road and was summonsed for using petrol contrary to regulations in 1918. It was thought that Walter had used his petrol for a pleasure trip to Scarborough, which was certainly not allowed. The case was eventually dropped, but illustrates the way the war affected everyone's lives.

7 Millfield Road

The Holub family lived at 7 Millfield Road. Joseph Holub had been born in Prague, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which would have made him an 'enemy alien', and as such, he may have been interned. We know that some non-British people were detained in 'tented encampments' at or near the Eye of York. Later on, a larger camp was built in Leeman Road, as York became a detention centre for people from across the country. Eventually internees were held in a camp on the Isle of Man.

We were very pleased to hear from Joseph's granddaughter in San Francisco. We know that Joseph worked at Cooke's Scientific Instruments, a very important local company in Bishophill, as a 'constructor of astronomic instruments'. Two of his daughters taught at Scarcroft School. They were Louise, who later married the Vicar of Giggleswick and Josephine. Joseph seems to have been an accomplished zither player, appearing at concerts. Even with the most tolerant and understanding neighbours, the family may have suffered some discrimination

Walk along further and look at no 14 across the road.

14 Millfield Road

Servicemen coming back from the Front were treated with awe and a great deal of respect. When Fred Brown, from 14 Millfield Road, was wounded in the leg, and sent back to England, he visited his old school at Cherry Street in Clementhorpe, where he spoke of his experiences at the Front. Fred Brown's sister, Winifred, literally played her part in the war effort. She was a pianist for Miss Guy's Ladies Orchestra and gave concerts to war wounded around the city.

Carry on up to no.46.

46 Millfield Road

At 46 Millfield Road, the teenage brothers Edwin and John Parker were working voluntarily as hospital orderlies, caring for wounded soldiers in York. The young brothers, not much more than school children, would have been well aware of the tragedy and destruction of war.

Continue to the top of Millfield Road and stop at the back gate to Millthorpe School. You will see a small plaque on the gate.

Millthorpe School

The original old building we can see here used to be Nunthorpe Court, built in 1856 and part of an estate of 33 acres belonging to Colonel Richard Frederick Meysey-Thompson. He trained horses and was a member of York Race Committee. His wife Charlotte was a famous horsewoman. Also living in the house according to the 1911 census were eight staff – a cook, four maids, two grooms and a cowman.

As an old soldier, Meysey-Thompson had commanded the 4th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, in campaigns on Africa's Gold Coast. He spoke forcefully about the duty of enlisting and was very scathing about conscientious objectors, saying they should be dressed in red and made to stand in front of the trenches. But he wasn't quite so patriotic when it came to his campaign to prevent the conscription of his cowman, Walter Porter,

whom he employed to tend to the three cows which supplied his household. York Military Tribunal went on strike over this, eventually prevailing and the cowman was sent to war. We don't know who milked the cows after this! Walter Porter survived the war.

Charlotte Meysey Thompson volunteered at the depot in Coney Street, making absorbent dressings from sphagnum moss. We know that she contributed 7200 hours there between 1917 and 1919. We also know that during the York Zeppelin raid in 1916 she took refuge in the basement of Nunthorpe Court, with the servants and local residents.

In 1920 the house and 11 acres were sold to York City Council, to create Nunthorpe Court Secondary School for boys, which later amalgamated with Mill Mount Secondary School for girls and became the Millthorpe School we know today.

With the plaque behind you, walk down Southlands Road. The houses to your right and the estate behind them, the Nunthorpe Estate would not have been built at the time of the First World War. Continue straight on to the cream and red coloured brick church with 2 squat towers, at the bottom of the road on the left.

Southlands Methodist Chapel

Southlands Methodist Chapel was opened in 1887. It could accommodate a congregation of 750 and had a block of 15 classrooms.

During WW1 it would have been a hive of activity, as soldiers billeted in York used it as a social centre - a Rest-Rooms Committee was formed by local volunteers to organise entertainment and refreshments and soldiers wrote appreciatively about this in their letters home. We know from reports in the Southlands magazine, 'The Messenger', that in the winter of 1914 the chapel hosted a social event for over 250 soldiers, with a sit-down meal and entertainment, including singing by Miss Blanche Humble and Mr T Wintersgill, impersonations by Private John Ball and Trooper Dowe's sword-swinging display.

Providing food and refreshments for the soldiers would have been difficult as war continued. At the start of the war, in 1914, Britain relied heavily on imported food, and when German U-Boats blockaded the food supply, some foods, notably sugar became scarce. There were food price rises at the start of the war, which led to prices being fixed for some foodstuffs. By 1918, queues for food were common and written of despairingly by the local headmaster at Cherry St School in Clementhorpe, in his school diary, as this affected school attendance. Instead of going to school, some children were being sent out to queue for food.

Stanley Parker was the Pastor of Southlands in 1914 and was very supportive of the conflict which he advocated in his sermons, actively encouraging local young men, some not yet 18, to enlist.

There is a memorial plaque inside, commemorating eight men from the congregation who lost their lives in the war. It was unveiled in 1920, the same year that a Thanksgiving Hall was opened (this was eventually demolished in 2016).

After the Zeppelin raid in 1916, the Chief Constable for York issued instructions and advice about air raid precautions. Around 20 men patrolled the neighbourhood of Southlands church from 11 pm to 2 am each night, to give warning of an impending air raid.

Cross the main road (Bishopthorpe Road) and go into Richardson Street, which leads to Rowntree Park.

Rowntree Park

Rowntree Park is a beautiful park which opened in 1921. It was donated to the people of York by Joseph Rowntree, as a tribute to the 200 workers of his chocolate factory who died or suffered in WW1.

It was York's first municipal park, and originally included bowling greens, an outdoor swimming pool, aviaries, a tearoom and snack bar and a bandstand for a full orchestra.

The lych gate by the bridge is a Grade II listed building and contains two memorial plaques, one for each World War. It also has a dovecote, The doves, symbolising peace, are believed to be direct descendants of the original ones.

When the park was opened in July 1921, Joseph Rowntree gave a speech to those assembled there. He ended his speech to the crowd by saying: 'let me say how greatly I desire that in the days to come this park will afford to many rest and recreation from the stress and turmoil of life, and bring health and happiness to large numbers of lives.'

Continue to the lych gate and make your way through Rowntree Park to your right, going south, past the ponds on your right to emerge at the gates near the Millennium Bridge across the Ouse. Turn right and walk up Butcher Terrace, past Terry Street and Finsbury Street, towards the Village Spice restaurant at the junction of Butcher Terrace and Bishopthorpe Road.

1 Butcher Terrace

Alexander Johnstone lived at 1 Butcher Terrace, before the war. He was appointed second lieutenant in the East Yorkshire Regiment. The National Archives at Kew hold fairly detailed notes about how Alexander died. As he went missing in action, no body was recovered for him, and in order to verify that he was dead, various witness accounts of his death were sought. According to eyewitnesses, he was killed by a machine gun bullet in the head in March 1918. He fell, and his body had to be left in no man's land, because it was too dangerous to recover him. His body was never recovered. He is commemorated on Cherry Street WM and the Arras memorial, France. Families who could afford it, managed to visit these memorials to those with no grave after the war, but such trips were too expensive for most.

Cross Bishopthorpe Road and continue up South Bank Avenue, with Vanilla Hairdressers on your right

South Bank Avenue

South Bank Avenue was originally a driveway leading to Nunthorpe Hall, and Nunthorpe Hall was used in WW1 as a VAD hospital for soldiers. It was demolished in the 1970's and Coggan Close now occupies the old site.

Nunthorpe Hall was where Lucy Gertrude Brown from Scarcroft Road was the cook.

Turn left at the first left turn, down Brunswick Street, which is signposted. Continue downhill, along Count de Burgh Terrace to the crossroads. You will see St Clement's Club on your left.

St Clement's Club

St Clement's Working Men's Club was originally an Adult School, one of several in the city. These were originally set up to teach working class adults to read, primarily the bible, other subjects were added and also social activities and clubs grew out of them. The Rowntree family was very much involved and by 1906 there were well over 2,000 members of the schools in York.

When conscription was brought in in 1916 there was a clause allowing for 'conscientious objection'. However this term was deliberately vague and men wishing to use it had to plead their case in front of military tribunals set up for this purpose, a daunting prospect for men with little formal education. Whether coincidence or not, many of the York conscientious objectors attended the adult schools, which encouraged Quaker principles of tolerance and peace, and they received help from the Quakers in the form of coaching before their tribunal and also could be represented by someone who would advocate on their behalf.

Percy Rosewarne, a railwayman living just round the corner at 7 Balmoral Terrace was a conscientious objector. He was court-martialled three times and imprisoned on Salisbury Plain and in Wandsworth prison where treatment was harsh.

From St Clements Club, looking downhill, you can see Knavesmire School, which was opened during WW1, in 1916. It should have been finished in 1915, but labour shortages because of the war had slowed work down. It was desperately needed to accommodate children, partly due to the requisitioning of Scarcroft School, but also to accommodate the increasing population in the area.

This junction of small streets would have been very busy in WW1. It is close to the Knavesmire, where, by September 1914, 1500 members of the 5th Reserve Cavalry were billeted in the racecourse grandstand. The Knavesmire eventually became a tented village of military personnel, accommodating 3500 personnel. From St Clement's Club, you can look up Queen Victoria St, westwards, towards the Knavesmire.

Just before the war started, the South Bank tram route opened and ran from the York Station along Bishopthorpe Road, up Balmoral Terrace and Queen Victoria Street, to its terminus at Albemarle Road. When the war caused a shortage of male workers, the tram's brakes had to be refitted with gears, making them easier for women to operate. Women had been recruited to replace male tram drivers who had left because of the war. The trams ran until 1935, when they were replaced by buses.

At least five men from Queen Victoria Street lost their lives in the war: two brothers Fred Long aged 24 and Edward, 22, Robert Cairns 29 and Arthur Neilson, 28, all of the West Yorkshire Regiment and Matthew Glover, 25, of the Royal Garrison Artillery. We can only imagine the atmosphere of grief and distress in these streets during those years.

With St Clements Club on your right, walk along Balmoral Terrace, with Janico on your right, towards Bishopthorpe Road. When you come to crossroads junction with Bishopthorpe Road, there is a bench when you can sit and look across the main road to the right for 230 Bishopthorpe Road – an end terrace house.

230 Bishopthorpe Road

This house was called 'Holme House' at the time of WW1 and it is from here that we have an eyewitness account of the 1916 Zeppelin raid, written by an excited sixteen year old Jack Kirby, in a letter to his sister Dorothy (Nellie in the letter), who was away at teacher training college in Ripon at the time, and also from her father, written in more measured tones.

"Well Nellie" writes Jack, "They have been here and left their trade mark with a vengeance" He goes on to describe how the gas light lowered, an early warning of an air raid, windows rattled at the back of the house, then a droning sound rapidly getting louder, until their father spotted a Zeppelin, approaching at great speed from the direction of Bishopthorpe. The family took refuge in their backroom downstairs from where they could hear dull bangs which "absolutely shook the house".

Both letters refer to the deaths in Upper Price Street and Nunthorpe Avenue, damaged houses and the fact that the nearby Military hospital at Nunthorpe Hall was set on fire and the wounded soldiers evacuated. Mr Kirby coolly remarks that they were "jolly lucky not to get the bombs any nearer"

These letters were found in the archive at Scarcroft School but how did they come to be there? A bit of detective work revealed that "Nellie" married a man with the surname of Theakstone and they had a daughter called Barbara. An obituary for a Barbara Theakstone appeared in the York Evening Press in 2009. She had been a long standing Headmistress of Scarcroft School and so it is likely she recognised the historical importance of these letters sent to her mother and deposited them there. They certainly helped to flesh out our understanding of the impact of the Zeppelin raid on our local area.

Incidentally Jack enlisted in the RAF the following year, ending a very successful career in 1946 as an Air Commodore CBE and it is possible he was influenced in his choice of career by what he had witnessed that night.

We are nearly at the end of the walk. Cross over Bishopthorpe Road and turn into Beresford Terrace.

8 Beresford Terrace

Albert Seal and his family lived here in 1914. Albert was born in 1898 and was the youngest, by five years, of eight siblings. His mother died shortly after he was born and he was brought up by two of his older sisters. His father was a train driver.

Albert attended the Southlands Chapel Sunday School and was in the Intermediate Class, from which eight men and boys had enlisted by December 1915. The pastor at Southlands, the Reverend Parker, apart from delivering fiery patriotic sermons, published a compilation of stories and essays entitled "Winning the Children" in which he addressed the young with such titles as "Hero or Coward?" and "Brave Heart". Also the names of those who had enlisted were published in The Messenger, the Southlands magazine.

Possibly influenced by his attendance at the chapel, Albert and his friend John Jackson, also a member of the Sunday School, enlisted in September 1914, without their families' knowledge. Both boys were 16 years of age.

Albert's father petitioned to have him sent home, as he was under the recruitment age of 18, but tragically before he could be persuaded he died in Belgium of a gunshot wound to the head, in the month after his 17th birthday.

John Jackson's mother also lobbied for his return, he survived the conflict.

Many boy soldiers fought during WW1 and thousands were killed. Despite their being under age it seems recruiting officers were happy to sign up anyone who volunteered. At the beginning of the war there were many enthusiastic volunteers, partly due to the general public being told that the war would be over by Christmas, and so the offices were very busy and there would have been little time to check ages even though it must have been obvious in some cases that the boys were too young.

Beresford Terrace was one of the many streets in York to hold street parties in July 1919, to celebrate the end of the war. At the Beresford Terrace street party there was a fancy dress competition and the first prize was awarded to two little girls dressed up as a wounded soldier and a Red Cross nurse. The local press reporting on the many street parties in York told of many fireworks and bonfires, which had been previously banned under the Defence of the Realm Act. Pianos were wheeled out onto the streets and singing and dancing went on until late. Most of the children got some sort of souvenir, for example a mug or a handkerchief.

We are now at the end of the walk. WW1 was different kind of war from those that had gone before. It was fought on a massive scale and affected everyone directly. We hope that this walk has given you an insight into the totality of the war. It is important to remember that, whilst millions of people lost their lives as a result of the war, the majority of the population lived through it. Many carried with them horrific memories, and the effects of each wartime tragedy affected many - friends, family and relatives in some way or another.