



# Sites of memory

## Westminster

The guided walk in this leaflet was devised by Jon Wright and Jo Moore of the C20 Society, to encourage people to look more closely at some of the best C20th war memorials in London. These combine outstanding sculpture with strong architectural forms and are an impressive legacy of national mourning and individual loss. The design of memorials formed a significant part of the work of important British architects and sculptors, particularly in the years following the First World War, but this walk also includes many more recent memorials.

Initially the team led guided tours along this route, but this leaflet enables you to take yourself at a time to suit you.

The C20 Society campaigns for the

preservation of the best architecture and design created since 1914. Its research and lobbying is underpinned by trips to look in detail at all styles and forms of C20 buildings. To learn more, join and have the opportunity to come on future trips go to [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk).

For more photographs and background information on C20 war memorials in Britain and abroad visit: [www.c20society.org.uk/war-memorials/](http://www.c20society.org.uk/war-memorials/). This walk is part of the C20 Society's Sites of Memory project, which provides self-guided tours and architectural information on more than 120 war memorials in London, Belgium, France and Northern Italy, and has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. For more information on these C20 war memorials visit: [www.c20society.org.uk/war-memorials](http://www.c20society.org.uk/war-memorials).

**Hyde Park  
Corner,  
W1J 7JZ**

**Machine Gun Corps, 1925  
Sculpture: Francis Derwent Wood  
Listed Grade II**

This memorial aroused instant controversy. The 9ft bronze figure of David presented the perfect image of the youthful soldier as well as the solitary nature of the machine gunner with deadly associations ‘Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands’ (Simon 18:6-7). The ‘Glorious Heroes’ are rewarded with wreaths hung over life-size replications of machine guns, accompanied by stacked soldier’s packs and helmets. Wood believed memorials should not disguise the tragic reality of war. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps as an orderly in 1915, using his sculptural skills to make masks for the injured, and setting up the Department for Masks for Facial Disfigurement (1917-19).

*Turn left and walk  
over to the west  
side of the  
roundabout*



**Hyde Park  
Corner  
W1J 7JZ**

**Royal Artillery Memorial, 1925  
Architect: Lionel Pearson  
Sculptor: Charles Sergeant Jagger  
Listed Grade II\***

Second only to the Cenotaph as a war memorial, this modern and unsentimental work is Jagger’s masterpiece. Pearson’s massive base carries a full-size 9.2 inch howitzer carved in stone. Jagger wanted to convey the “terrific power” of the artillery in stone. Below the howitzer, life-size bronze statues of an officer, a driver, a shell-carrier, and—a bold decision—a dead artilleryman lying anonymously under a tarpaulin, are combined with stone reliefs depicting war as painful labour in a style reflecting Assyrian art. Side panels depict the trench mortar, Lewis gun, and the ordinary rifle, together with a French shrine, a kitchen, the sign “wind dangerous” and a bell, used to give warning of gas. Other panels show the signalers, the names of trench tracks, the Royal Arms and the arms of the regiment.

In 1949 three bronze panels were added in memory of the 30,000 men of the Royal Artillery who were killed in World War II.

*Turn left and walk  
round to the south*



**Hyde Park  
Corner  
W1J 7JZ**

**Australian War Memorial, 2003  
Architects: Tonkin Zulaikha Greer  
Artist: Janet Laurence**

Taking its inspiration from the contours of the site, the memorial is partly a landform, rising from the surface of the park through a series of Australian granite slabs. Tonkin explained that “the form chosen for the memorial reflects the sweep of the Australian landscape, the breadth and generosity of our people, the openness that we believe should characterise our culture”. Also reflected in the shape of the wall are echoes of Australia’s flora and cultural heritage – the gumleaf and the boomerang. The 23,844 place names etched into the solid granite of the wall record the origins of those who served in the two world wars. Overlaid are the names of 47 of the battles in which they fought.

*Walk back past  
the Wellington  
Arch and cross  
the road to reach  
Constitutional Hill.  
The four gate piers  
are just ahead  
of you*





---

**Constitutional Hill**

---

**Commonwealth Gate, 2002**  
**Architect: Liam O'Connor**

This memorial celebrates the contribution made by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Caribbean in both World Wars. A competition held in 1999 was won by Liam O'Connor but in response to amendments made by Westminster City Council the design was changed. As executed, the pylons surmounted by dishes and the Indian pavilion or chattri on the St James's Park side of Constitution Hill show a clear debt to Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, demonstrating how the Classical style of the memorials produced after the Great War for the Imperial War Graves Commission continues to resonate.

*Drift northwards off Constitution Hill over the grass of Green Park*



---

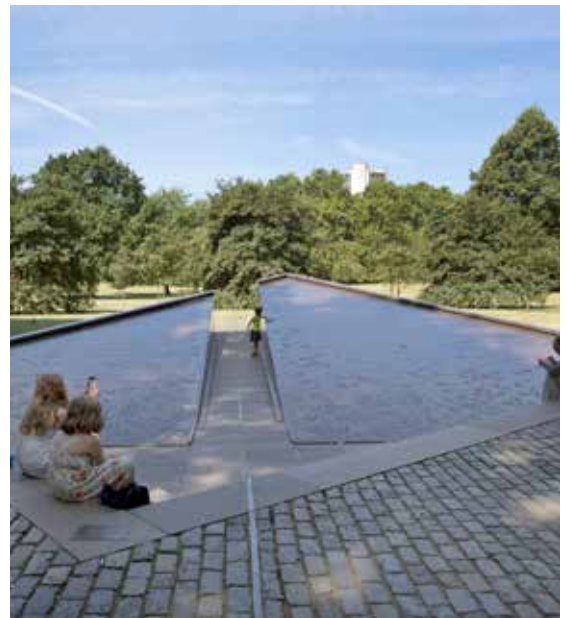
**Green Park**

---

**Canada Memorial, 1994**  
**Sculptor: Pierre Granche (1948-1997)**

Like much of Granche's work, the memorial places emphasis on integration and interaction, and a relationship between sculpture and architecture. The monument is divided by a path in the middle, encouraging people to walk in close proximity to the work. As a fountain the memorial welcomes contact with the environment; leaves falling and washing over their bronze counterparts, or children playing. The sculpture is also an arrow to Halifax, Nova Scotia, reflecting the port from which soldiers and defence material embarked during the two world wars. The granite and bronze used for the work was transported from Canada, via Halifax.

*Head southwards to pass Buckingham Palace and go up the Mall, cutting through St James's Park to reach*



---

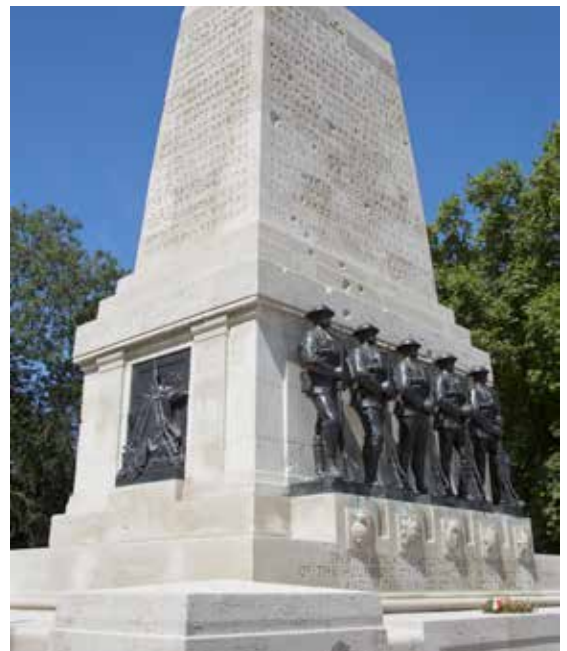
**Facing Horse Guards Parade SWIA 2BJ**

---

**Guards Division Memorial, 1926**  
**Architect: Harold Chalton Bradshaw**  
**Sculptor: Gilbert Ledward**  
**Listed Grade II**

The memorial at Horse Guards Parade, commemorates 14,000 Guardsmen who died in the Great War. The first design was inspired by Galloni's Garibaldi monument in Rome but it evolved into a stocky and severe stone obelisk, or pylon, against which stand a deliberately stiff, and formal row of five guardsmen. Ledward was instructed that each was to represent a typical soldier from each of the five divisions: Grenadiers, Coldstreams, Scots, Welsh and Irish Guards. On the rear face of the memorial, facing St James's Park, is a panel depicting an 18-pounder field gun being loaded.

*Cross over to Horse Guards Parade and look to your left*



**Horse Guards  
Parade  
SW1A 2BJ**

**Royal Naval Division Memorial Fountain,  
1924  
Architect: Sir E.L Lutyens  
Listed Grade II**

A circular fountain bowl with central obelisk, the memorial features the names of prominent regimental actions, along with the badges of the various regiments that made up the division. To allow construction of the adjacent Citadel building (1940-41) the memorial was removed and stored until 1952, when it was re-erected in Greenwich. After a long campaign by the Division, supported by HRH The Prince of Wales, the memorial was returned in 2003 – the plinth having remained undamaged throughout the building work on the citadel.



*Walk north-west  
along the edge  
of the park to*

**Horse Guards  
Road**

**The Royal Artillery Boer War Memorial  
Architect: William Robert Colton  
(1867-21)  
Listed Grade II**

The war memorials erected for the Anglo-Boer Wars in the UK represented the first mass raising of war memorials in this country. The scale was unprecedented, no previous war, even those of a similar scale such as the Crimea (1854-1857) and Napoleonic Wars (1798-1815), resulted in such popular and public expression. This one, which records the names of 1,078 dead, was unveiled by H.R.H Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught on 20th July 1910. The plinth rests on a granite platform, with a curved back wall and pillars at either end. Colton's sculpture depicts a winged figure (peace), calming and controlling a horse (the spirit of war).



*Walk along  
the Mall towards  
Admiralty Arch,  
and look on  
the north side*

**The Mall  
SW1Y 5AH**

**Royal Marine National Memorial, 1903  
Architect: Thomas Graham Jackson  
Sculptor: Captain Adrian Jones  
Listed Grade II**

This memorial has had a turbulent history. Constructed in 1903 to the Royal Marines killed in South Africa and China, it has been moved several times and suffered bomb damage in 1940 before being restored in 2000. The sculpture shows a wounded marine being defended by a fellow soldier, his levelled rifle and bayonet suggesting an imminent attack. The pedestal has inscribed bronze plaques and two reliefs depict action at Graspan (Boer) and the repulse of the Chinese attack on the Peking Legations. The carved dolphins on each corner symbolise the marines as a naval force.

Jones had trained as a vet, enrolling as a veterinary officer in the Royal Artillery in 1867 and serving, among other locations, in Egypt where he selected camels for the 1884 Nile Expedition.



*Walk under  
Admiralty  
Arch and across  
Trafalgar Square  
to the north-east  
corner. Cross  
Charing Cross  
Road just north  
of St Martin  
in the Fields*



**Charing Cross  
Road  
WC2N 4JH**

**Edith Cavell  
George Frampton (1860-1928), 1920  
Listed Grade II**

Edith Cavell (1865-1915) was a British nurse based with the Red Cross in occupied Belgium. She helped hundreds of Allied soldiers escape to the Netherlands, for which she was arrested in 1915 and imprisoned for ten weeks, before being court-martialed. She confessed in full to her crimes and was executed by a firing squad at dawn. The nurse became the most prominent female casualty of the Great War, her death the subject of Allied propaganda worldwide. Revealed in 1920, the memorial was criticised for its modern style, particularly the European Expressionist style of the top sculpture (note the Germanic plaits!) The female figure completes a cross form; she is not a Madonna and Christ child, but a contemporary mother protecting a child. A further fault was the 'pedestrian' positioning of the sculpture, overshadowed by the monumental cross.

*Walk behind  
St Martin's Road  
and cross Strand,  
to reach Villiers  
Street, to the  
left-hand side  
of Charing Cross  
Station, to reach  
Embankment  
Gardens*



**Embankment  
Gardens  
WC2N 6PB**

**Imperial Camel Corps, 1920  
Sculptor: Cecil Brown  
Founder: A. B. Burton  
Listed Grade II**

The Imperial Camel Corps were formed to patrol the western desert in the First World War and fought major campaigns in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine protecting Allied troops evacuated after Gallipoli. Most famously they helped Lawrence of Arabia capture Jerusalem in 1916-18. The majority of the Infantry was Australian. They later fought the Turks, assisted by an artillery unit from Hong Kong and Singapore. By the end of the war 346 of their formation had died in action. It is thought that Major Cecil Brown (1868-1926) was a corps officer.

*Proceed down  
the embankment*



**Victoria  
Embankment  
WC2N 5DJ**

**Anglo-Belgian Memorial  
Architect: Sir Reginald Blomfield  
Sculptor: Victor Rosseau, 1920  
Listed Grade II**

This memorial was a gift from the Belgian nation to thank Great Britain for their assistance in the First World War, and as a token of gratitude from the Belgians who had found refuge in England during the German occupation. The memorial features bronze figures representing a Belgian woman accompanied by a boy and a girl both carrying garlands. The Portland Stone surround contains the figures of a man and woman, representing "Honour" and "Liberty". The memorial also contains nine shields representing Brabant, Anvers (Antwerp), Liege, Hainault, Namur, Limbourg, Luxemburg and two for Flanders.

*Cross the road and  
go westwards along  
the Embankment,  
under Hungerford  
Bridge and pause  
by the Thames*



---

**Victoria  
Embankment  
WC2N 5DJ**

---

**Royal Air Force Memorial, 1923**  
**Architect: Sir Reginald Blomfield**  
**Sculptor: William Reid Dick**  
**Founder: Parlanti**  
**Listed Grade I**

---

The first RAF Memorial Committee was set up in February 1919, responding to the suggestion of Maj. Gen. J. M. Salmond that the force should have its own London chapel. When the cost became too high, they decided to build a memorial. Blomfield found Whitehall Steps “a beautiful site”, but one that imposed limitations. The need to leave access space around the memorial limited the dimensions of the base, affecting the height the pylon could be carried to without injuring its proportions. The required height could only be achieved by the addition of the eagle and globe. The eagle, based off a painting by Archibald Thorburn, was originally designed to face in towards the Embankment but Blomfield seems to have decided that it would look better taking off over the river. The motto of the RAF, PER ARDUA AD ASTRA (“Through struggles to the stars”) is inscribed around the frieze of the pylon.

*Continue along  
the Embankment*



---

**Victoria  
Embankment  
WC2N 5DJ**

---

**Battle of Britain Memorial, 2005**  
**Architect: Tony Dyson,  
Donald Insall Associates**  
**Sculptor: Paul Day**  
**Not listed**

---

A memorial to Winston Churchill’s famous few, this was funded by selling maquettes of the sculpture. Dyson worked closely with Day to design the memorial around one of Bazalgette’s granite plinths, a ventilation shaft for the District line. Day had courted controversy several times, and his depictions of the elements that ‘made-up’ the Battle of Britain had a populist slant, reinforcing a lot of the clichés and half-truths about the Battle. Of all the recent memorials on this trip, this one has been the most debated, fuelling arguments about the continued need for the constructing of memorials.

*Cross back over  
the road, and go to  
the first monument  
on the lawn*



---

**Victoria  
Embankment  
Gardens  
WC1A 2HE**

---

**Chindit Memorial, 1990**  
**Architect: David Price**  
**Sculptor: Frank Foster**  
**Not Listed**

---

The Chindits were a British India ‘Special Force’ serving in Burma and India in 1943-44 during the Burmese Campaign. They were formed into long-ranged penetration groups trained to operate deep behind Japanese lines. The memorial is in the form of a stone column with a bronze Chintse on top and blue enamel crest of the chindits association on the front face. Chintses are mythical beasts, the guardians of all Burmese temples. The Chindits’ motto was ‘the boldest measures are the safest’. The rear of the monument is exclusively dedicated to Orde Wingate, who suggested the creation of the Chindits in 1939.

*Immediately  
to the right*





**Victoria  
Embankment  
Gardens  
WC1A 2HE**

*Passing other  
military heroes,  
head back east  
and turn the  
corner, stopping  
on Horse Guards  
Avenue*

**Fleet Air Memorial, 2000  
Sculptor: James Butler  
Not Listed**

The Fleet Air Arm is the operational group of the Royal Navy, responsible for the operation of aircraft on board their ships, as well as search and rescue. During World War II the Fleet expanded from 20 squadrons comprising 232 aircraft to 3,700 with almost 60 aircraft carriers by VJ Day. Like Daedalus, legendary Greek inventor and father to Icarus, the winged character appears not in mid-flight, but stands as if on a cliff, seemingly carrying the weight of responsibility for those who have taken to the skies. Although in flight kit, the pilot's arms are bare, their curling biceps signaling, perhaps, human fragility and the physical energy required in take-off.



**Horse Guards  
Avenue  
SW1A 2EX**

*Continue to emerge  
on Whitehall and  
turn left*

**Ghurka Memorial, 1997  
Sculptor: Philip Jackson  
Not Listed**

The Ghurkas is the collective name for the Brigade of Nepalese soldiers that serve in the British Army. Originally drawn up to serve the British East India Company in the early nineteenth century, they formed their own unit after proving their loyalty in the Indian Mutiny, for which they were awarded the honour of wearing the Royal 'Green jackets' with red trimmings. Ghurkha Regiments served the British Indian Army in both World Wars losing 43,000 men, and their motto became 'Better to die than be a coward'. They have continued to serve alongside British troops abroad, and formed part of the Queen's home guard from 1971. The Ghurkas still carry into battle their traditional weapon - an 18-inch long curved knife known as the kukri. The memorial's quote is taken from Sir Ralph Turner, a former officer in the 3rd Ghurkha rifles. 'Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had country more faithful friends than you.'



**Whitehall  
SW1A 2NP**

*Walk south*

**Haig Memorial – The Equestrian  
monument to Field Marshal Haig, 1937  
Sculptor: Alfred Hardiman  
Base: S. Rowland Pierce  
Listed Grade II**

Earl Haig had been the Commander-in Chief of the British Armies in France from 1915-1918. A week after his death in January 1928, the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, proposed a statue to him. Sir Lionel Earle lobbied for it to be positioned near the Cenotaph in Whitehall, despite opposition from King George V. The horse, derived from Hardiman's studies of Renaissance sculpture, was more classical charger than WWI cavalry. Lady Haig was particularly critical, asking why Haig was not depicted on his own horse, Poperinghe, and the British Legion campaigned to have the sculptor paid off. Hardiman listened with quiet stoicism and altered his design several times.



**Whitehall  
SWIA 2NP**

**Women of World War II, 2005**  
**Sculptor: John W. Mills**  
**Bronze on Portland Base**  
**Not Listed**

Unashamedly a companion to the Cenotaph, the size and form of this memorial deliberately relate to Lutyens' pylon. The choice of bronze separates the two, but makes the memorial dark and heavy. Around the sides are hung various uniforms that would have been worn by female volunteers. Over seven million women volunteered for the armed services and supporting roles in ammunition factories, first aid and the Land Army, in the Second World War; 450,000 were conscripted into the armed forces. This monument is dedicated to all those women who served, a tribute to an entire generation, many of whom are still alive today.



*Continue south*

**Whitehall  
SWIA 2NP**

**The Cenotaph, 1920**  
**Portland Stone**  
**Listed Grade I**  
**Architect: Sir E. L. Lutyens**

This national memorial to the million British Empire dead was originally intended as a temporary "catafalque" for the Peace Celebrations on 19th July 1919. Sir Edwin Lutyens was recommended to Lloyd George, and is said to have told him "not a catafalque but a Cenotaph", that is, a monument to someone buried elsewhere. The tall pylon carrying the symbolic sarcophagus was composed with immense subtlety and refinement. All vertical and horizontal surfaces are modelled with curved entasis or optical corrections, and the monument is given dynamism by Lutyens' characteristic method of alternating set-backs.

The temporary Cenotaph became a focus not just for official ceremony but for grief: "the people's shrine". A million people made

pilgrimage and eventually the government acceded to public demands for it to be re-created in stone. Small changes were made to the design, and the permanent Cenotaph unveiled on Armistice Day, 1920, when the body of the Unknown Warrior was drawn past to be interred in Westminster Abbey. Lutyens' design was criticised by some for its lack of Christian symbolism, but he wanted forms which had meaning "irrespective of creed or caste" as not only Christians had died.

So perfect was the Cenotaph found to be for its melancholy purpose that, after another war, nothing more was needed than to carve two more dates: 1939-1945. Lutyens died during that war. His daughter Mary later described the Cenotaph as "his soul, the quintessence of his genius –



Photographs  
© Sarah J Duncan