

The 'Burnt Documents'

In carrying out the research for this trail we have spent much time searching the World War I military records. It is important to note however that it is estimated that over half the records of the men who fought were lost in a fire following a German bombing raid in 1940. The surviving papers are known as the 'burnt documents' and many are only partially complete. As a result we have also used other sources such as newspaper reports from the time and where possible made contact with local families. We would like to thank everyone who has assisted in our research.

We have told the stories of as many people as we can in the trail but there will inevitably be many others for whom we have not managed to find any information but who almost certainly took part in the war.

Conscription was introduced in January 1916 as it became clear that the numbers of men volunteering did not meet the massive demand for more fighting manpower. Initially only single men aged 18 to 40 years were called up though the sad truth is that many under that age volunteered and died. In May 1916 conscription was extended to include married men and then in June 1918 the age limit was raised to 51 years. A large proportion of Ditchling's men would have been called up. Conscription lasted until 1919.

World War I - Street by Street

The Impact of the Great War on Ditchling

Follow the trail which takes you around the centre of the village - street by street - to learn how the war affected the lives of Ditchling families.

The posters tell stories of men who left the village to fight and of the men and women who remained on home soil to work towards the war effort in a variety of ways, some taking on new roles. Read about those who gained exemptions to carry out vital jobs in the village and the imprisonment of a conscientious objector who could not reconcile fighting with his pacifist beliefs.

For practical purposes, the trail is confined to the centre of the village and does not include the men who left their homes on the village outskirts, including Ditchling Common where some families lost more than one son. More information on the twenty men named on the village war memorial can be found in the church.



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World War I

Trail

Street by Street

The Impact of the Great War on Ditchling

20 October - 1 December
2018



Ditchling Football Club, 1911 - 12

We have no names for these young men, but many must have served in World War I

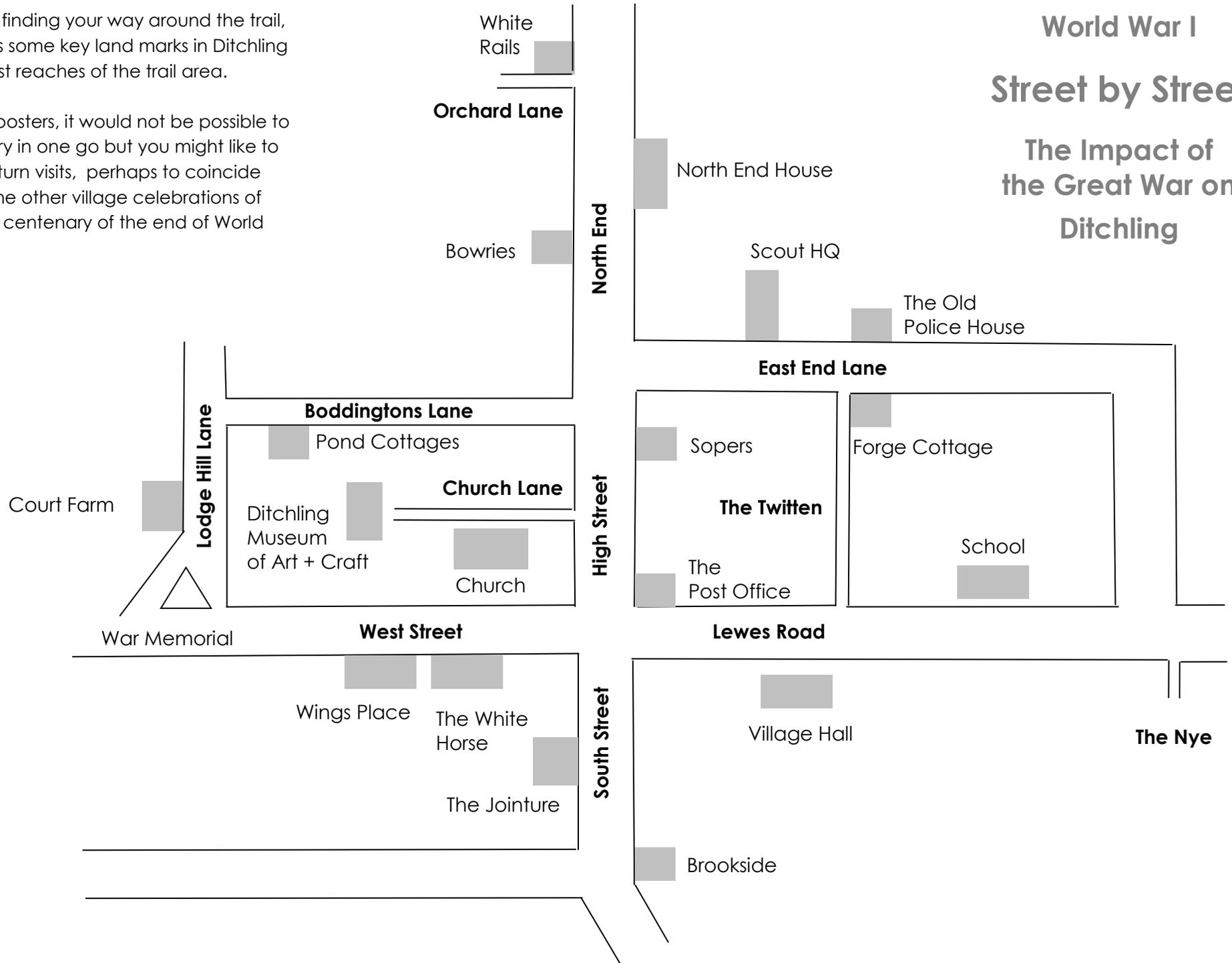


DITCHLING HISTORY PROJECT

To assist you in finding your way around the trail, this map shows some key land marks in Ditchling and the furthest reaches of the trail area.

With over 100 posters, it would not be possible to read every story in one go but you might like to make some return visits, perhaps to coincide with some of the other village celebrations of the hundredth centenary of the end of World War I.

North



World War I Street by Street

The Impact of the Great War on Ditchling