

Tel: 01376 574 130

Email: info@angliatours.co.uk

www.angliatours.co.uk



2 DAY TOUR

Footsteps of Wilfred Owen

Day 1

Sheffield Park

The old lie

In the copses from where the Pals Battalions went over the top, we establish the necessary military, historical and literary contexts vital to any appreciation of Owen.

What expectations and attitudes constitute “The old lie”?

- What did the soldier poet volunteers of 1914-15 imagine war would be like?
- What are the typical characteristics of their poetry?
- How is this view encouraged by the popular media?
- Owen strikes back in “Dulce et Decorum Est” Reference to “Arms and the Boy” and “Insensibility”.

Serre 2 Cemetery

We’d found an old Boche dugout

In sight of where Owen first saw action in January 1917, we read the letter to his Mother describing the experience and hear “The Sentry”.

- What are the characteristics of this poetry of experience?
- In what ways have diction, imagery and structure changed and to what effect?
- Shell shock, Craiglockhart Military Hospital and the crucial meeting with Sassoon.

Redan Ridge Cemetery

For love of God seems dying

- The life of 2nd Lieutenant Owen on the front line
- How have these experiences informed the way he writes?
- “Exposure” and “Futility”.

Newfoundland Park

Beaumont Hamel

All a poet can do is warn

- Battlefield ‘walk and talk’.
- Owen’s description of No man’s Land.
- First hand experience and experimental technique combine to evoke the reality of battlefield conditions. “Exposure” and “The Show”.

Thiepval

What passing bells for those who die like cattle?

- Ethos and layout of CWGC and memorial to the missing.
- Owen returns to the Western Front, fights “Like an Angel”. Military Cross and death in November 1918.
- “Anthem for Doomed Youth”, “Strange Meeting”.

Tel: 01376 574 130

Email: info@angliatours.co.uk

www.angliatours.co.uk



Day 2

Riqueval Bridge

In the corses from where the Pals Battalions went over the top, we establish the necessary military, historical and literary contexts vital to any appreciation of Owen.

What expectations and attitudes constitute “The old lie”?

- War of movement, problems caused by need to cross obstacles such as these?
- The story of the saving of the bridge and the crossing of this canal by the Manchesters on 29th September.
- Owen’s death attempting to cross the Sambre-Oise canal on November 4th.

Joncourt – Cemetery

One dies of war like any old disease

- What are the characteristics of this poetry.
- Owen’s recovery from illness and his return.
- “A Terre” and “The Last Laugh”..

Joncourt – The German Defences

I only shot one man with my revolver. The rest I took with a smile

- War injuries and their treatment in the First World War.
- “Disabled” and “Mental Cases”. Technique and experience combine to produce powerful evocation of subject matter rarely touched on in poetry.

The Sambre Canal

Where death becomes absurd and life absurder

- Set scene, apply ideas from Riqueval. Snapshot insights of the morning. Owen’s C.O., Capt. Kirk VC.
- The death of Owen. Known facts and fictional treatment in Pat Barker’s “The Ghost Road”.

Ors Cemetery

Shall life renew these bodies? Of a truth all death will he annul?

- Owen’s legacy – the journey from obscure officer/poet to most widely read poet of the twentieth century.
- Opportunity for students to lay poppy wreath accompanied by readings, comments of their own choice.