

*'The compassion and  
commitment of a community at war'*

# World War I Trail

## About the World War I Trail

Huddersfield witnessed many extraordinary sights in World War I. From the extremes of emotion at the railway station to magnificently supported fund-raising parades and entertainments; from hotly contested Military Tribunals to the treatment of wounded soldiers at designated war hospitals, this trail takes in several fine buildings that bear witness to this unique period in the town's history.

The locations on this trail, and the related information, were selected from information researched for the book *Huddersfield in World War I*, published by the Huddersfield Rugby League: A Lasting Legacy heritage project in 2014. The book can be ordered from [huddersfieldrlheritage.co.uk](http://huddersfieldrlheritage.co.uk).

## Information

For more information about Discover Huddersfield or to learn more about the project and how to get involved, please get in touch through the following media:

[discoverhuddersfield.com](http://discoverhuddersfield.com)

Email: [info@discoverhuddersfield.com](mailto:info@discoverhuddersfield.com)

@discover\_hudds

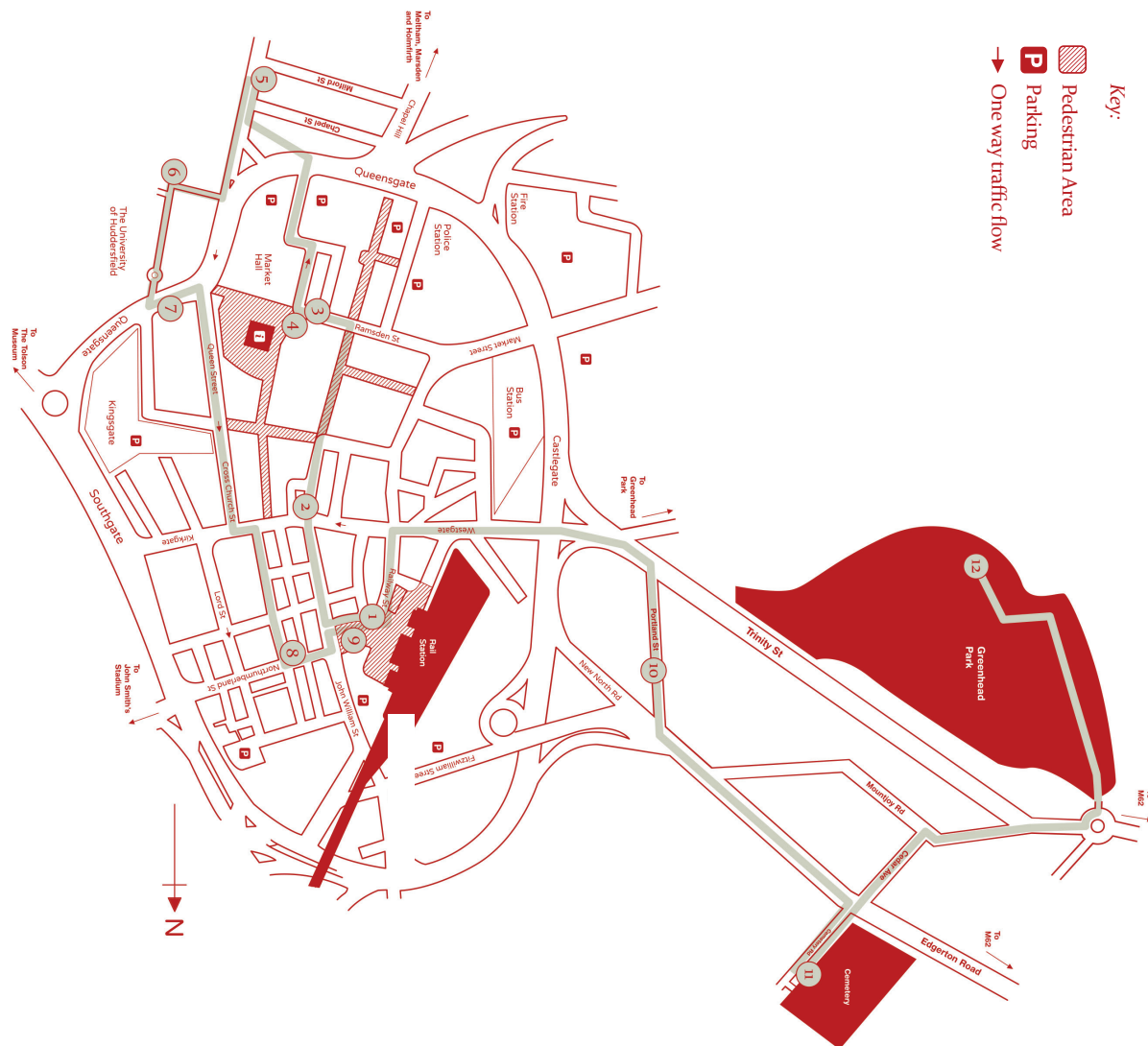
Discover Huddersfield



Recruitment poster for war service in the forces and at home



# World War I Trail



*Discover Huddersfield* offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.



Motor Volunteers and official ambulances await a convoy of 100 wounded soldiers



The crossed quills, symbol of a centre of writing



## 7 Hippodrome

The Hippodrome Theatre (left of The Zetland pub) staged regular fund-raising performances. Wounded soldiers and the wives of local territorials often received free admission. Propaganda-laden dramas and satire were staple fare – for instance, Dick Whittington needed petrol coupons to travel to London. Routinely, choruses dressed in the flags of the Allies, villains were German and heroes were British. Performances often included patriotic appeals for recruits.



## 10 Former Infirmary

The first wounded soldiers arrived 29 October 1914. The infirmary provided numerous beds, and the local Ladies' Committee sent shirts, bed jackets, dressing gowns, pillows, etc. Several private homes and nursing homes offered bed space and in October 1915 a locally funded War Hospital opened at Royds Hall, later supplemented by several smaller war hospitals around the district.

Royds Hall and field hospitals abroad had open air wards pioneered by the country's leading pathologist, German Sims Woodhead OBE, who was born and educated in Huddersfield.

## 1 Railway Station, St George's Square

The station witnessed many emotional wartime arrivals and departures. The first Belgian refugees arrived in September 1914. Harrowing convoys of wounded soldiers, many on stretchers, were met by motor volunteers who transported them to Military Hospitals in an assortment of vehicles. For months following the Armistice, returning servicemen were met by joyful loved ones.

## 2 Market Place

Various protests were staged here, including anti-conscription meetings where men burnt their call-up papers. Annual propaganda meetings commemorated the declaration of war and re-stated its aims.



## 3 Town Hall

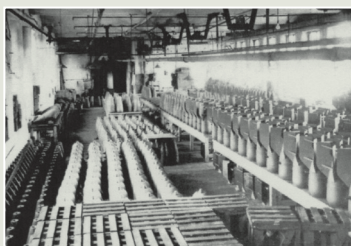
Here, in August 1914, 4000 people attended Huddersfield's first volunteers' recruitment meeting to form a new battalion of the West Riding Regiment. In February 1915 Suffragettes Annie Kenny and Mrs 'General' Drummond addressed a recruitment rally.

The Huddersfield Military Service Tribunal heard appeals against conscription, the followers of socialist conscientious objectors singing the 'The Red Flag' uproariously through the corridors. This was also the HQ for several war relief funds spearheaded by the Mayor and Mayoress.

## 4 Old Huddersfield Examiner Office

'Your paper is eagerly looked forward to ... it keeps us in touch with the old town.' (letter from the front, October 1915)

Reduced to just four pages owing to paper rationing, the *Examiner* promoted patriotism. It published graphic accounts from all theatres of war, including local men in suicidal attacks across No Man's Land, and a local family surviving the torpedoed *Lusitania* in 1915.



## 5 Thomas Broadbent

One of many local ironworks, chemical and textile factories engaged in essential war work, Broadbent's made overhead travelling cranes, steelworks for plant and centrifugal extractors for explosives. A new foundry was built to manufacture thousands of cast steel aerial bombs. Many ships at the Battle of Jutland were equipped with Broadbent's ammunition hoists.

## 6 Drill Hall

The Drill Hall was the barracks and depot of the 90th Territorial Force until 1917 when it became another Military Hospital, the local territorials moving to share regimental facilities in Halifax.

In autumn 1916, as German attacks on merchant shipping threatened food supplies, troops joined the 'Digging for Victory' campaign, creating an allotment on the south side of the building.



## 8 Post Office

The Post Office distributed life-changing telegrams about the fatalities, injuries and survival of local men. Deliveries were reduced as staff joined the forces. In 1917, ex-postmaster Colonel Treble became Huddersfield's first CMG. Sorting clerk and telegraphist, Corporal Albert Squires, earned the Military Medal for maintaining contact with an aeroplane while under heavy shell fire.

## 9 St George's Square

Many celebratory and fund-raising processions began or ended in St George's Square. In July 1915, the RSPCA's 'War Horse Day' procession included horses in bandages, and a zebra from Halifax Zoo! 'Tank Week', launched here in February 1918, raised £2,680,899 in war fund investments. Various protest and propaganda meetings were staged here. The Motor Volunteers equipped a Lloyds Bank building as a refreshments and leisure facility for wounded soldiers.

## 11 Edgerton Cemetery Main Entrance

Most of the soldiers who died at Royds Hall are buried here. For each funeral, hundreds lined the streets to pay their respects. Few of these troops were from Huddersfield and none were further from home than Privates B Shearman and T Lawson of the 46th and 49th Canadian Regiments. They were fatally wounded in the capture of Vimy Ridge at the start of the Battle of Arras (1917).



## 12 Greenhead Park War Memorial

Greenhead Park was the venue for recruitment meetings, parades of military equipment, inspections of local platoons, fund-raising fairs, and concerts by local and military bands. Huddersfield's main WWI Memorial was unveiled here in 1924. Local districts, churches and other institutions have their own memorials.