

# Dorchester Poppy Trail



## 1 Top o'Town House

The house of the Camp Commandant of the Marabout Barracks.

## 2 The Keep Military Museum

Originally the gatehouse of Marabout Barracks, home of the Dorset Regiment. Behind is the former parade ground and barracks.

## 3 The Army Reserve Centre

Formerly the barracks of the Royal Horse Artillery and before that the Dorset Volunteer Rangers' Yeomanry.

## 4 Grove Trading Estate

All this area was used as a Prisoner of War Camp between 1914 and 1919. At its height, around 4,500 Germans were housed here – first in tents, then in huts.

## 5 The Royal Horse Artillery Riding School

Built in 1799 for the Dorset Volunteer Rangers' Yeomanry as an indoor riding arena, with an ammunition store in the basement. Later used by the Royal Horse Artillery and used in WW1 as a carpentry workshop for the PoW camp.

## 6 Marabout Barracks Hospital

Built in 1799 as a hospital for the army camp and later used to treat sick or injured prisoners of war.

## 7 PoW Camp Hut

This is one of the last remaining huts, once used to house German prisoners of war in the camp on the other side of The Grove. After the First World War, the huts were sold off and this one was moved here.

## 8 Colliton House

Used as a hospital during the First World War. 18 beds were installed in 1914. By 1917 there were 200 beds housed in tents across Colliton Park.

## 9 Shire Hall

Thomas Hardy served as a magistrate in the Court here. During the War, Hardy sat on the anti-profiteering committee, making sure local traders did not put up their prices unnecessarily by claiming it was due to the War.

## 10 Holy Trinity War Memorial

Once the garrison church, Holy Trinity was built in 1876.

## 11 The Post Office War Memorial

Post Office workers who died in the First and Second World Wars are commemorated on the memorial on the left of the entrance.

## 12 The War Memorial

Built in 1921 to commemorate 'the gallant Dorchester men who had so nobly sacrificed their lives for King and Country'.

## 13 The German War Memorial

'Here lie German soldiers in a foreign land but not forgotten. 1914: Dorchester: 1919' reads the inscription, commemorating those German prisoners of war who died at the Dorchester prison camp.

## 14 Fordington St George War Memorial

There is a memorial within the church and some gravestones commemorating soldiers and sailors in the churchyard.

## 15 Channons (now Majestic Wines)

The garage and engineering workshop made parts for gun carriages and was one of the first in the area to employ women. Eddison's Steam Plough Works in Fordington increased their provision of steam ploughs to replace the horses taken away from the land for use by the Army.

## 16 The Corn Exchange

Used for recruitment rallies, as a drill hall for the Dorsetshire Volunteer Corps and to house troops on occasion. The Soldiers' Home was opposite in North Square.

## 17 Dorchester Prison

Conscientious objectors were held here.

## 18 Poundbury Centenary Field



DORCHESTER HERITAGE COMMITTEE



# The Poppy Trail

## Dorchester and the First World War



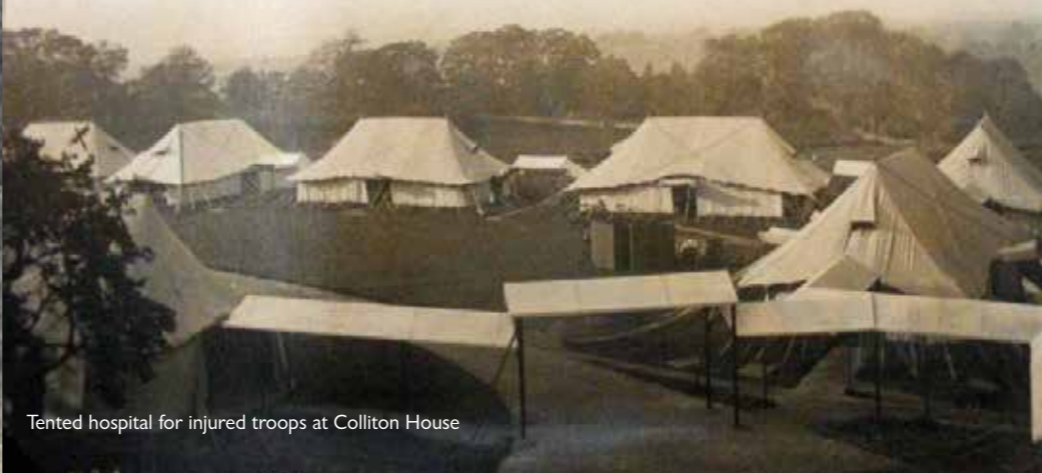
German prisoners of war guarded by British soldiers in Dorchester, 1917

## Dorchester

Garrison Town

Dorchester was an army town from the 1850s, when the Dorset Militia set up a permanent base here. This was expanded in the 1880s, when the Dorset Regiment came into existence and the Marabout Barracks were built, along with the Royal Horse Artillery Barracks. The army occupied a large area of land in the north-west corner of Dorchester and the town was full of soldiers.

The gatehouse is now the Keep Military Museum of the Devon and Dorset Regiments. It was built in 1879 and designed to resemble a Norman castle. Go down Barracks Road behind the Keep and you will see where the parade ground was. Some of the former barrack buildings are now used by the Royal Mail. Look for the arched doorways – you can see the names of battles inscribed on some of them.



Tented hospital for injured troops at Colliton House

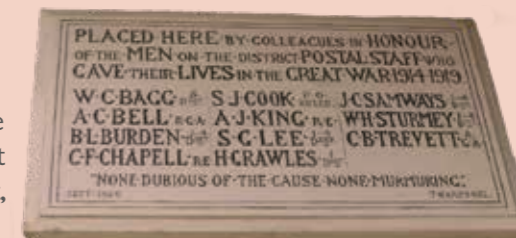
## The War Memorial

The main War Memorial lists 239 names of people who died in the First World War. In addition, there are memorials at Holy Trinity Church, Fordington St George, St Peter's Church (including one to bellringers from Dorset) and the Post Office. William Cake, aged 23, and William Teversham, aged 28, were the first Dorchester men to be killed in the First World War. They both died on 24 August 1914 in the Battle of Mons. Teversham was born in Dorchester to a military family. His father was a colour sergeant with the 3rd Dorset Battalion and at the outbreak of war William and his three brothers joined up. William and his elder brother Percy were both killed and are listed on the memorial here.

Cake was born in Owermoigne and enlisted in the 1st Dorset Battalion in 1907, becoming a sergeant in 1914. He married Elsie Legg from Dorchester in January 1914 and served in Ireland and then France. He was killed on the second day of the Battle of Mons and is believed to be buried in Hautrage Military Cemetery. Elsie was told of his death after the battle, but did not receive his personal effects until November 1921. She wrote to ask for information: "I am very anxious to visit his grave, which the War Graves cannot find yet" but his exact grave site appears never to have been verified.

## The Post Office Memorial

Thomas Hardy was commissioned by the Post Office to provide the inscription for a memorial to the eleven local postal workers killed in the First World War. Honoured to be asked, Hardy offered to design the monument as well. Before he became a successful novelist, Hardy had trained as an architect, and was a skilful draughtsman. He produced the work in a week, writing to the district postmaster that 'the service that I rendered was a very small thing to do for the devoted men whose names appear in the list'.



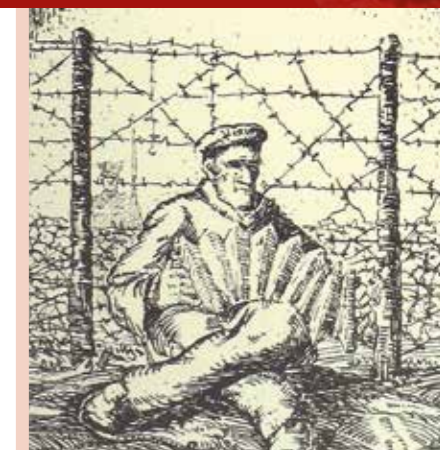
The inscription 'None dubious of the cause, none murmuring' was taken from one of Hardy's earlier poems 'The Embarcation'. Written in 1899, the poem reflects on the departure of soldiers from Southampton Docks to the Boer War, and laments that 'the late age of thought' cannot find a better solution than war to international disputes. The second marble plaque gives the names of three postal workers killed in the Second World War.

## The German War Memorial

& Karl Bartholmay 1874-1968, German War Artist

Among the prisoners of war in the Dorchester camp was Karl Bartholmay. Born in Elberfeld, he trained in the town's Arts and Crafts School, where he won an award for wall-panel design, and later became a lecturer.

A man of many skills, in his prison drawings Bartholmay expresses the loneliness of a confined life. He was the designer of the fine German War Memorial in Fordington churchyard. Josef Walter, born in Augsburg, was the sculptor.



Bartholmay's 'Dreaming'. Could this be a self-portrait?

## Find Out More

Welcome to Dorchester's Poppy Trail – look for the plaques with a poppy symbol and tour the sites of importance to Dorchester's First World War history. The sites are spread about the town, so you may prefer to discover them over several trips rather than in one go. We recommend a visit to the Keep Military Museum to find out more about the Dorset Regiment and the First World War.

Read about the lives of the people commemorated on the War Memorial in Brian Bates' book, *Dorchester Remembers the Great War* (2012) and about the German prisoner of war camp in his book *Living with the Enemy: Dorchester's Great War Prison Camp* (2016), both published by Roving Press.

The Poppy Trail was created by the Dorchester Heritage Committee and the Keep Military Museum, in conjunction with Common Heritage and Wallis Agency. We are grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund and to our project volunteers: Ann Connell, Malcolm Davenport, Valerie Dicker, Martin Graham, Anita Harries, Marc Johnson, Jean Lawson, David Milner, Jane Rayner, Ernie Thomas, and Chris Copson, Curator, and volunteers at the Keep Military Museum.



German prisoners sweeping Dorchester streets



## The German Prisoner of War Camp

During the First World War, Dorchester had one of the largest German prisoner of war camps in the country. The men were housed first in the brick buildings on the extensive grounds of the Royal Horse Artillery Barracks, which are now part of the Grove Trading Estate. Then rows of huts were built, with heating and electric light, each housing about thirty prisoners. (Their guards, meanwhile were accommodated in bell tents on the draughty slopes of Poundbury hillfort.)

The German soldiers were well-catered for. Food was free, though officers could pay to obtain a better diet. For breakfast and supper the men received coffee with condensed milk, accompanied by bread and margarine. The bread was baked in the camp and each row of huts had its own kitchen. Dinner was the main meal, served at midday. This included the types of food stipulated by the Government: meat and vegetables, potatoes beans and lentils. Salted herrings were served on Fridays. Parcels from home brought more variety and touches of luxury with chocolates and cake.

There was at least one happy customer!



Prisoner of War Camp, now the Grove Trading Estate