

FALL IN, GHOSTS

PARTICIPANTS' THOUGHTS

N.B.

Evaluation forms were sent to all 40 participants and 32 responded by commenting on the headings listed. Individual comments are quoted. Those without quotation marks are the views of more than one.

1. The Hotel

What went well:

- Fit for purpose
- Breakfast good (if somewhat chaotic)
- Staff friendly
- Good location
- Comfortable

Better still if:

- More time between end of day and dinner
- Allow more time to see Arras
- WiFi 'patchy'

2. Dinner arrangements

WWW:

- Dinner arrangements rated 'excellent' by all
- All enjoyed the opportunity of dining together
- Pre-dinner presentations well received and thought to 'add value'
- Good menu choice
- Good that different venues were used
- Excellent service for vegetarians

BSI:

- Cellar too noisy

3 Lunch

I didn't ask for a response about lunch but many commented that the arrangements worked well. It was quick, adequate and saved valuable time.

4 The programme

WWW:

- "Couldn't have been better"
- "Excellent – very good indeed"
- "Unforgettable"
- "Hugely educational"
- "Diverse, full and lots of opportunities to meet interesting people"
- Time well used
- Well organised
- Reading on site particularly powerful
- "Brilliant"

BSI:

- Maybe do less in more depth
- No opportunity to walk the battlefield
- Last day didn't draw together the first three – too rushed
- Day 4 needed more on Rosenberg
- Too much Blunden
- Too much Rosenberg
- Could have used UTW as more of a road map

5 Value for money

WWW:

- "Excellent VfM"
- Most thought it good value and appreciated most things being inclusive
- "No nasty surprises"
- "Worth every penny"
- "Outstanding"

BSI:

- Single room supplement high
- "Reasonable" (single traveller)

6 Organisation

WWW:

- "Outstanding"
- "Planning was terrific"
- "Superb"

BSI:

- More time in Arras
- More time to meet the French
- Coach pick up some way from the tube station
- Earlier start to each day would have allowed more time in Arras & for reflection
- Email contact list should have been circulate

7 Presentations

WWW:

- "Hugely educational"
- "Readings were wonderful"
- "Absolutely matchless"
- "Brought History alive and made it so vivid!"
- "I really appreciated the enthusiasm and commitment of all those involved"
- "It was obvious that much hard work had gone into the planning"
- "Varied"
- "Enlightening"
- "Close to perfection"
- "It was really excellent that so many group members took part"

BSI:

- "Some readings too long"
- "Would have liked more"
- "Too much on the war itself which reduced time on the topic"
- "Too little emphasis on the poets themselves"
- "Too many ends left untied"
- "Not always easy to hear some of the readers"

8 Most memorable aspects of the tour

- "The human appeal of both the writers"
- "Visiting many out of the way places!"
- "Bernard reading Break of Day...." at his uncle's grave
- "Tracing the trenches on the Thiepval Ridge"
- "Bernard demonstrating the Lee Enfield to a young audience"
- "The final pre-dinner discussion"
- "Michael Longley reading so wonderfully"
- "The contribution of so many in the group"
- "The mixture of the history and the poetry"

9 Least memorable aspect of the tour

- "Not all readings were easy to follow"
- "Stupid coffee machine in the hotel"
- "Not all the presentations seemed relevant"
- "Not enough time for quiet and reflection!"
- "No opportunity to walk the line"
- "I would like to have worked in smaller groups at times!"