

From Wellington to Haig: the British at War, 1815-1918

Start date 7th June 2019**End date** 9th June 2019**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Dr Sean Lang**Course code** 1819NRX037**Director of Academic Centres** Sarah Ormrod**For further information on this
course, please contact**Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus
zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746204**To book** See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Sean Lang is Senior Lecturer in History at Anglia Ruskin University, where he specialises in the history of modern Europe and of the British Empire. He studied at Oxford and lectured in Education at Exeter University before becoming Head of History at Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge.

He did his PhD at Anglia Ruskin University on 'Maternal Mortality and the State in British India, c1840-c1920'. He has written extensively for school students, including textbooks and magazine articles, as well for the wider public: he is the author of four history books in the For Dummies series, including British History for Dummies and First World War for Dummies. He was Honorary Secretary of the Historical Association and now heads its Cambridge branch. He broadcasts regularly on history and politics on BBC local radio and has appeared frequently on national television. He is an award-winning playwright: his plays have been performed in Cambridge, Oxford, London and the Edinburgh Fringe.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 **Session 1: The Battle of Waterloo – Wellington and his world**

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 2: The Charge of the Light Brigade – the Crimean debacle**

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Session 3: The Cawnpore Well – Mutiny and Rebellion in India**

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 **Session 4: The Modern Major-General - Wolseley and the Military Revolution**

18:00 – 18:30 Free

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30 **Session 5: Churchill's Charge – the Battle of Omdurman**

21:30 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 6: The Relief of Mafeking – the lessons of the Boer War**

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Session 7: The Three Battles of the Somme – the controversy of command in the First World War**

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Content:

Like many nations, the British have long identified themselves in terms of their experiences in war. For a hundred years, from 1815 to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the British lived in the shadow of Wellington and his victory at Waterloo. It was in the confidence instilled by these victories that the British went to war in the Crimea in 1854, sure that the spirit of Wellington and Nelson had rendered them invincible. The blunders and losses of that war soon revealed that this confidence was misplaced, and the Crimea was followed by a dire military emergency when rebellion, which started as a military mutiny, broke out in India the following year.

After the Crimea the British agonised about the lessons it had taught. Was there a need to overhaul the army? Had the days of officers buying their commissions and of flogging soldiers had their day? A major wake-up call came in the 1860s, when the highly professional army of the Kingdom of Prussia revealed to an astonished world just what modern arms were capable of. There followed a scramble to modernise the army and navy, but in each case the reformers met with determined resistance from the old guard.

Meanwhile Britain's global imperial responsibilities kept its army on constant active service. Expeditions into China and Afghanistan sparked controversy, while the wars in southern Africa, against the Zulus and the Boers, led repeatedly to humiliating disaster. By 1900 the British were wondering if their military reverses suggested that there was something fundamentally wrong in the 'British race'. The Boer War in particular seemed to have given the British what Kipling called 'no end of a lesson', a lesson the army tried to put into practice when it went into action against the Germans in Belgium in 1914.

The Great War began on a tide of optimism: the British confidently expected that they had mastered the art of warfare and would be able to send the Germans packing in time for Christmas. It soon became apparent that this was a very different war from the colonial wars the British were used to, and that even the crack marksmanship the British tommy prided himself on would not be enough to stem the advance of enormous German army. The learning curve involved in meeting the logistical challenges of trench warfare was steep and it took years and thousands of lives before the British were able, in 1918, to win one of the most remarkable military victories in their history – remarkable not just for its scale but also because it has been almost completely forgotten.

Presentation of the course:

- Illustrated lectures
- Class discussion
- Work with sources and problem-solving exercises

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of the events and issues relating to Britain at war in the period 1814-1918.
- An understanding of the changing nature and responsibilities of military command.
- A deeper insight from working with documents and other relevant materials of different interpretations of the impact of war on Britain in this period.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
HOLMES, R. (2003),	<i>Wellington: the Iron Duke</i>	(London: HarperCollins)
HOLMES, R. (2006),	<i>Sahib: the British Soldier in India</i>	(London: Harper Perennial)
HOLMES, R. (2011),	<i>Soldiers</i>	(London: HarperCollins)
JAMES, I. (2002),	<i>Warrior Race: a History of the British at War</i>	(London: Abacus)
MALLINSON, A. (2011),	<i>The Making of the British Army: from the English Civil War to the War on Terror</i>	(London: Bantam)
NASSON, b. (2011),	<i>The Boer War: the Struggle for South Africa</i>	(London: Spellmount)
ROYLE, T. (2000),	<i>Crimea: the Great Crimean War, 1854-1856</i>	(London: Abacus)
SHEFFIELD, G. (2016),	<i>Douglas Haig: from the Somme to Victory</i>	(London: Aurum)
TODMAN, D. (2007),	<i>The Great War: Myth and Memory</i>	(London: Hambledon Continuum)
ROYLE, A. (2015),	<i>The British Army in the Victorian era: the Myth and the Reality</i>	(Royle publishing)
DAVID, S. (2002),	<i>The Indian Mutiny: 1857</i>	(London: Viking)
CORNWELL, B. (2014),	<i>Waterloo: the History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three Battles</i>	(London: HarperCollins)
CLAYTON, T. (2015),	<i>Waterloo: Four Days that Changed Europe's Destiny</i>	(London: Abacus)
WOODHAM-SMITH, C. (1987),	<i>The Reason Why: the Story of the Fatal Charge of the Light Brigade</i>	(London: Penguin)

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 30 May 2019