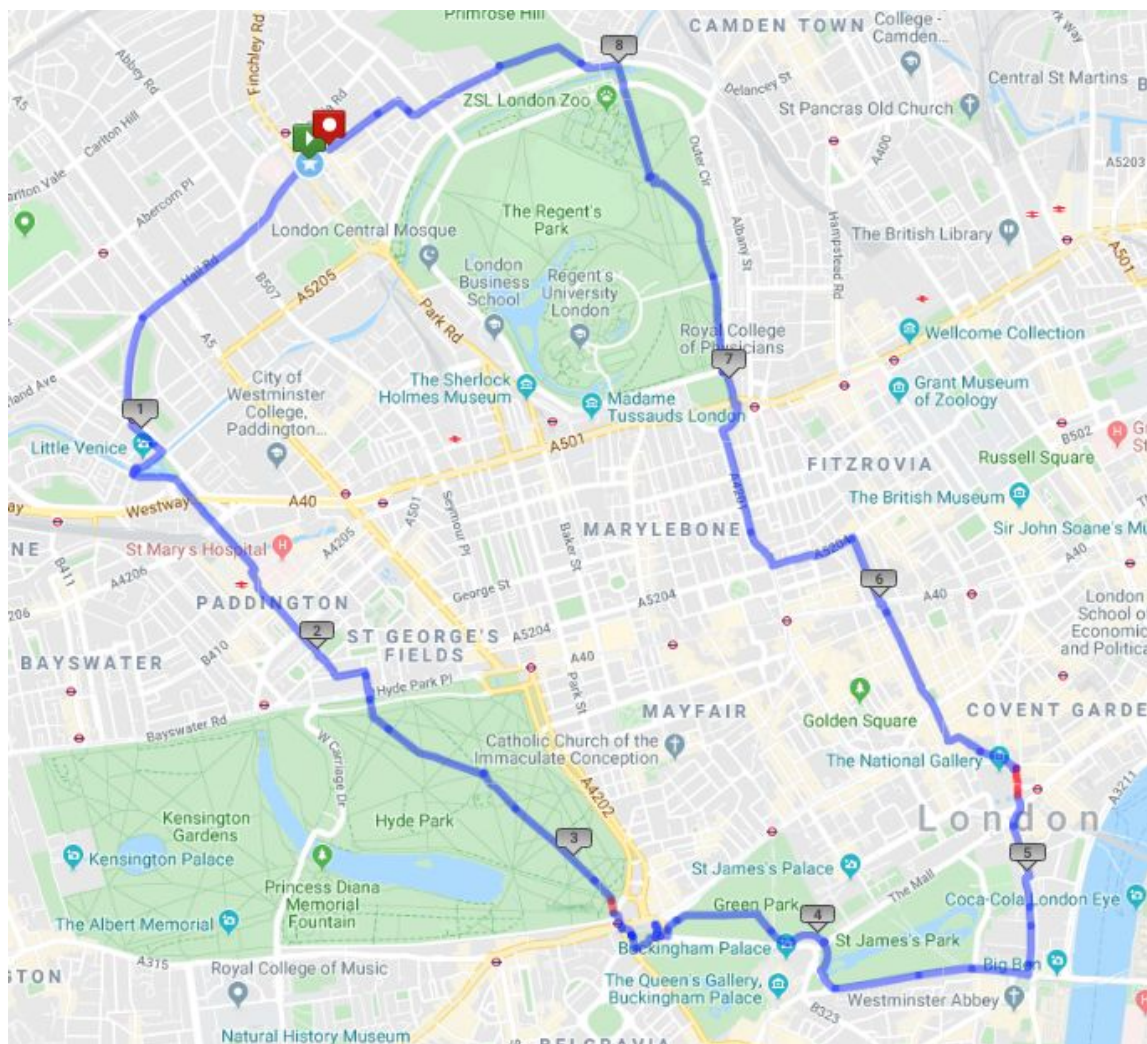


Remembrance Day: A Run for Women Running the World (9 miles)

One of the (many) reasons we love WRW is because, well, London! We are spoiled for choice with our running routes — parks, palaces, seats of government, markets, the Thames. We have adventures every time we run — be they encounters with frustrated pedestrians, parade preparations on The Mall, narrow misses with rushing cyclists, coffee at Hampton Court, or the occasional tumble into the canal. So many stories to tell.

Remembrance Day, marked here in the UK and in many countries around the world with ceremonies and two minutes silence, is a day set aside to remember and honor those who have died in war. It falls on the anniversary of the cessation of hostilities of World War One, when the armistice was signed between the Allies and Germany early in the morning of 11 November 1918 in France. The armistice officially began on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Thus, the two minutes silence, first held on 11 November 1919, is held at 11:00am.

How can we as WRW mark Remembrance Day? Let's take a run through London and discover a few of London's WW1 and WW2 wartime stories...with a slight emphasis on the experience of women.



1. **Hamilton Terrace** - Top Secret Dentistry in WW2

Head down Circus Road and cross Grove End Rd to Hall Rd. At the Hamilton Terrace traffic light, give a nod to the grand red and white buildings to the right where Dr Beryl Murray Davies lived at 79 Hamilton Terrace. Davies was a dental surgeon who had her own flourishing Harley Street practice from the 1940s until the 1970s. During World War II she worked with the top secret Special Operation Executive (SOE), which conducted espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in occupied Europe. Davies, working at night and in complete secrecy, replaced British operatives' fillings with European-style dentistry in case the individual was captured. For operatives who were escapees from Europe — Davies would change their dental work so that their identity couldn't be determined by historic dental records. Another excruciating procedure would have been when she had to hollow out molars to hide cyanide capsules.



It is said that agents were more frightened of visits with Davies than they were of the actual mission ahead of them. Davies died at the age of 102 - after surviving cancer in her hand (believed to be due to carrying out dental x-rays) and being forced to retire as a consequence. Sadly, Davies was never formally recognized for her wartime service.

2. **Warrington Crescent** - WW1 Aerial Bombing

Run down the hill to the Sutherland roundabout, taking the left after the Warrington Pub onto Warrington Crescent. Keep an eye out for the five tudor style houses set back from the sidewalk to your left. Most have heard about the Blitz during WW2. But it is not as well known that the Blitz was not the first time that England was under attack by aerial bombings during war. In the early years of WW1 the Germans sent Zeppelins across the Channel to bomb military and industrial sites outside of London. Why not London? Kaiser Wilhelm (King George V's first cousin) had prohibited its bombing. However, that changed in 1915 when London became fair game.

The sight of these enormous dirigibles (imagine the Gherkin turned on its side and floating overhead) was terrifying. The English Channel no longer served as a barrier to invasion, and the war was quickly brought to the homefront. As the British developed better anti-aircraft defences, the Germans developed better aerial technology and the Zeppelins were replaced

by enormous bi-plane bombers which could carry enormous loads. Five of these aircraft, called Giants, flew air raids over London the night of 7 March 1918.

The first dropped its 1000 kg bomb just before midnight on Warrington Crescent in Maida Vale, flattening four houses, killing 12, injuring 33, and causing severe damage to 20 additional houses. Lena Ford, an American who had written the lyrics to the popular wartime song “Keep the Home Fires Burning”, and her 30 year old disabled son were two of the victims. Ford’s mother survived the bombing. The scene at the site was described by a rescuer who worked all night tunnelling beneath tons of debris at enormous risk. “I had seen towns and villages in Flanders shelled to pieces but none presented such a scene of desolation as this. Bodies shattered almost beyond recognition were buried wholly or in part beneath the fallen masonry.”



Warrington Crescent Bomb Site, Maida Vale, March 1918

The four other Giants dropped bombs in areas familiar to us — Belsize Park, Townsend Road and Newcourt Street in SJW, and opposite Lord’s Cricket Ground — killing eight others.

One outcome of the nighttime bombings was its impact on women’s nightwear. Clothing manufacturers began marketing warm and practical pajamas for women to wear in case they needed to jump from bed and run outdoors to escape an air raid. The beginning of the end for nightgowns!

3. Working Women

Carry on down Warrington Crescent, past Warwick Avenue Tube Station until you reach the bridge over the canal. Though women were no strangers to the workforce prior to WW1, the advent of war brought jobs for women on a new scale. Women took over many roles which had previously been the sole domain of men, working in factories, transport (Maida Vale Underground Station opened in 1915 with the first all-female staff!), and even policing, with the newly formed Women Patrols. The Women Patrols were tasked with ensuring responsible behavior on the part of women, whom some believed unfit for their new roles. The Patrols ensured that women entering munitions factories did not carry anything that might cause an explosion, and they patrolled the streets to keep “girls and lads out of the deep doorways and shop entrances”. Many had to leave their WW1 jobs upon the return

of men to the workforce in 1919. WW2 saw women again take on jobs traditionally held by men — such as mechanics, engineers, shipbuilders, plumbers, and air raid wardens.

In WW2, a diverse group of women trained to work on canal boats and were ironically called the “Idle Women” (stemming from the initials “IW” for Inland Waterways). These women worked in groups of three to operate the narrow boats carrying coal, steel, and cement on the canals between London, Birmingham, and Coventry. They passed through Little Venice on the 467 mile round trip journey. It was physically grueling work, and the women toiled for 18-20 hours/day, often in the dark, rain, and cold. The blackout meant they were unable to use flashlights when operating the 356 locks. “We subsisted on cocoa with condensed milk, national loaf and peanut butter,” one Idle Woman recalled. “I was always hungry - all the time.”



4. Paddington Station - Evacuees in WW2



Carry on straight over the canal to the tunnel that goes under the Westway, then over the curving metal pedestrian bridge to run alongside Paddington Station and note the Paddington Bear statue on your right before you reach the station. Fear that German bombing would cause civilian deaths spurred the evacuation of children and other vulnerable people from British towns and cities during WW2. There were three waves of evacuations; the first, in September 1939, saw 1.5 million evacuees sent to the countryside. Paddington Station was the starting point for many of those journeys. Paddington Bear author Michael Bond recalled his inspiration for Paddington bear, “I had memories of children being evacuated from London with a label around their necks and all their possessions in a suitcase and this became part of Paddington”.

The evacuees lived with strangers, often in circumstances totally unknown to them — and, by January 1940, 60% of that first wave had returned to their urban homes.

5. Hyde Park in War

Keep Paddington Station to your right as you leave the canal area and head to Hyde Park. Cross Praed St, cross Sussex Gardens and continue straight down London St until you come to a small roundabout with a Fuller's pub ahead on the left. Turn left in front of the pub onto Strathearn PI, right onto Clarendon PI, and cross at the zebra crossing into Hyde Park. Cross N Carriage Dr, the sandy horse trail and the hard path paralleling it, and then take the SECOND angled path to the left to head towards the eastern edge of Hyde Park — the goal is to get to the corner we always exit the park from onto Hyde Park Corner. There are a few path options but as long as you angle left here you will eventually end up in familiar territory.

Many of us have seen the shrine to Lady Di at the gates of Kensington Palace, where, particularly at the anniversary of her death, hundreds if not thousands of bouquets of flowers are placed in her memory. This practice goes back many years, to at least WW1, when people built street shrines throughout London to those who had died for their country. These shrines attracted those of all faiths.

In early August 1918 a large flower shrine was erected at the corner of Hyde Park near where we normally exit the park. 200,000 people are said to have visited the shrine by the middle of August. This great interest spurred the powers that be to install a more permanent shrine at the same location. However, the King was not a fan of famed architect Sir Edward Lutyens' design, and the project fizzled. The following summer Lutyens designed a memorial very like his Hyde Park design, which was placed on Whitehall as an official, and subsequently very successful, memorial site. Initially a temporary structure made of wood and plaster, Lutyens was later tasked with making it a permanent memorial of stone. This memorial is the Cenotaph in Whitehall, still the focal point of Remembrance Day ceremonies in the UK.



WAACs training in Hyde Park, 1917/18

Hyde Park was used regularly throughout WW1 and WW2 as a site for troops to gather and to carry out training exercises. Women had a role to play here as well. The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was established in December 1916, so that women could take on non-combatant jobs - as cooks, waitresses, clerks, drivers, and mechanics - formerly performed by soldiers in France, thereby freeing the soldiers for combat.

A more lighthearted look at the uses of Hyde Park during WW2 is captured in this May, 1944 photo of two US servicemen teaching English girls how to jitterbug. Hyde Park was said to be a favorite spot for US soldiers to meet English women. Couples would row on the Serpentine and watch the Americans play their regular noon softball games. The photo takes on more significance when you realize D-Day was only a few weeks away.

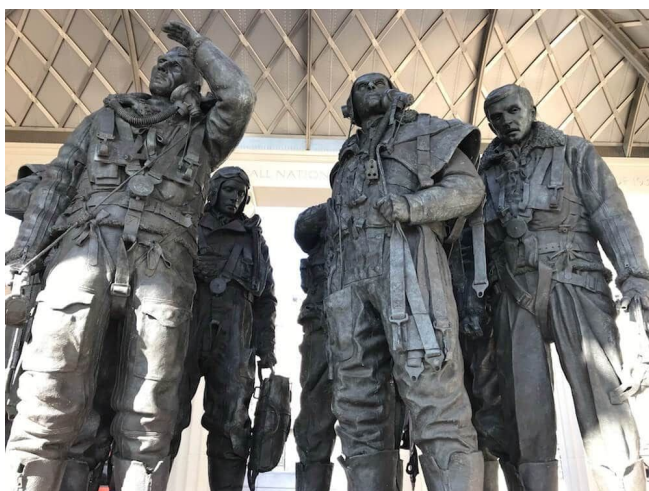


6. Hyde Park Corner

Cross into Hyde Park Corner with its four war

memorials. Hyde Park Corner is home to a number of war memorials. The Royal Artillery Memorial is to the right once we cross at the traffic light from Hyde Park. Nearly 50,000 gunners died in WW1, and the figure of a soldier in death, covered by an overcoat, is a particularly poignant reminder of that toll. Two modern memorials are the Australian and New Zealand War Memorials, dedicated in the 2000s. The granite slabs of the Australian War Memorial were brought from that country, and are marked with the hometowns of the 102,000+ Australian soldiers who died in WW1 and WW2. The New Zealand War Memorial, dedicated in 2006, comprises 16 “standards” which have been variously described as warriors performing the haka, or the barrels of guns. The surfaces of the standards are covered in reminders of New Zealand’s plants, animals, and culture.

The Machine Gun Corps Memorial, to the left of the New Zealand Memorial, was sculpted by Francis Derwent Wood. During WW1 Wood brought his artistry to the war effort by creating masks for soldiers who had suffered facial injuries. The masks, made of thin metal, were sculpted to match pre-war portraits of the men, and enabled them to more confidently return to their relationships with families and friends.



7. Green Park

Cross from Hyde Park Corner at the traffic light as normal to Green Park, but turn left in the park to get to the Bomber Command Memorial inside its columned portico. The RAF Bomber Command memorial in the northwest corner of Green Park commemorates the 56,000+ Allied aircrew who lost their lives during WW2.

8. Guards' Chapel, Birdcage Walk - "One Sunday my friends went to the Guards' Chapel..."

Continue for a very short distance past the Bomber Command memorial to where the path forks to the right — it is signposted "Buckingham Palace". Follow this path towards the palace. At the open area where many paths meet and a large Victorian lamppost stands, turn right towards the palace. You'll pass a modern, low-built Canadian war memorial in the grass to your left — it isn't in the write-up but is something to visit sometime.

Continue towards the palace, across the top of St James Park and left on Birdcage Walk. There is a long iron fence that runs along the right side of the road. Just after the gate marked with the "Wellington Barracks" sign in blue you will see the side of the rebuilt Guards' Chapel with its low bell tower.

Enid Sykes was a 20 year old student at King's College London living in Earl's Court during WW2. She became friends with three other young women in her building — they would go for walks, exploring the gothic Brompton Cemetery nearby (site of our Halloween run). On the morning of 18 June 1944, Enid's three friends went to a service at the Guards' Chapel. Enid had studying to do and stayed behind.

Germany first targeted London with the deadly V1 flying bomb on 13 June 1944, in response to the successful Allied landings on D-Day. The goal was to undermine morale. Five days later, on that Sunday morning, the Guards' Chapel took a direct hit.

The roof, walls, and pillars of the chapel collapsed, burying the congregation under tons of rubble. 121 soldiers and civilians were killed, including Syke's friends. 141 were seriously injured. Doctors and nurses had to scramble in between the rubble to administer morphine and first aid, and it took 48 hours to remove the survivors from the wreckage. It was the most serious V1 attack on London of the war. Syke rarely spoke of the incident — only saying, "One Sunday my friends went to the Guards' Chapel. They never came back."

9. Parliament Square

Continue to Parliament Square. Take a look across to the right at the statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square — Churchill himself determined the spot where it now stands. His pose reflects his posture from a photo showing him viewing the destruction of the House of Commons after a bombing during the Blitz in May 1941, shown here.



10. The Cenotaph, the Poppy, and the Women of World War Two Memorial

Turn left onto Whitehall. The Cenotaph is in the center of the road — note the poppy wreaths at its feet. Further along Whitehall you will come to the Women of World War Two Memorial.

Standing at the heart of Whitehall, the Cenotaph is the national memorial to the dead of Britain and the British Empire in the First World War. Repatriation of the dead had been forbidden since the early days of the war, so the Cenotaph came to represent the absent dead and served as a substitute for a tomb for those in mourning. On Remembrance Sunday, the Queen and other dignitaries attend the ceremony and lay poppy wreaths at the base of the Cenotaph.



Poppies are a hugely significant symbol of remembrance in this country. Poppy seeds need light in order to grow, and without sunlight can lay dormant for 80 years. This red flower bloomed in full force in the aftermath of the WW1 battles in Belgium, battles which had torn up the ground's surface and exposed the seeds to light. Canadian Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, surgeon during the Second Battle of Ypres, referenced these poppies in his poem "In Flanders Fields" which he penned in 1915 upon the death of a friend killed in action in Belgium.



Three trailblazing women are known to have pushed for the adoption of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. One, Moina Michael, was an American professor who left her position to work for the YMCA supporting the war effort in NYC during the war. She subsequently campaigned for the sale of poppies to raise funds for disabled war veterans. Canadian Lillian Bilsky Freiman worked tirelessly for the benefit of war veterans, including co-founding what would become the

Royal Canadian Legion. Freiman crafted the first Canadian poppies in her living room. A Frenchwoman, Anna Guérin, imported artificial poppies from France to the UK for the first poppy appeal here in 1921, and convinced the Royal British Legion to adopt the poppy as its emblem. The Legion subsequently sold millions of poppies for the benefit of veterans, and has continued to do so every year since.

In the UK people wear the poppy to honor those who served in and were impacted by war, their families, and others who have suffered loss due to war and terrorism.



Whitehall and the surrounding streets have many war memorials, all of which are worth a visit. However, for WRW, let's take a moment to take in The Women of World War II Monument, dedicated in 2005. Its form is reminiscent of the Cenotaph, and the uniforms hung around its perimeter reflect the variety of roles women played in the war effort.

11. Edith Cavell Memorial

Continue up Whitehall to Trafalgar Sq and stay on the right side of the road while edging around the right side of Trafalgar Square. Shortly after St Martin-in-the-Fields you will see the Edith Cavell Memorial, opposite the National Portrait Gallery.

Edith Cavell was an English pioneer of modern nursing in Belgium where she ran a clinic prior to WW1. When Germany invaded Belgium Cavell cared for the wounded on both sides of the conflict, and sheltered British soldiers until they could be safely evacuated. This action was prohibited in occupied Belgium, and led to her arrest by the Germans, her placement in solitary confinement for 10 weeks, an accusation of treason, and finally her execution in October 1915 at the age of 49. She was seen as a martyr for the Allied cause and was used as propaganda by the British.



A quote by Cavell, 'Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness for anyone', was added to her memorial at a later date.

12. The West End: Leicester Square

Use the crossings to cross towards the Portrait Gallery, go around to the right of the Portrait Gallery onto the angled Irving St that becomes a pedestrian way into Leicester Square. Cross into Leicester Square on the diagonal.



Construction of the trench shelter in Leicester Square in February, 1940
Copyright Westminster City Archives

Over 30,000 Londoners were killed during the Blitz, and tens of thousands of buildings were destroyed. Four bombs on four different occasions struck Leicester Square. One fell on 17 April 1941, a particularly heavy night of bombing which began at 9pm and did not stop until dawn, and which saw damage to such iconic buildings as St Paul's Cathedral, Parliament, and the National Gallery. A high explosive bomb struck a direct hit on the shelters built in the northeastern corner of the square and caused casualties. Our route goes right over this site.

However, even during wartime, Leicester Square was a hub for entertainment in London and was home to cinemas and restaurants that civilians and military personnel enjoyed. And, people watched the world go by from benches in the square. This photo depicts an American soldier escorting two women across the square towards the Odeon Cinema where *The Phantom of the Opera* is playing.



Hampstead resident Irene Fletcher remembers that “It was a great time to be in the West End — people used to just get on with

it. When you'd walk through the streets you'd see the bomb damage ... everywhere, but still young women would be sitting on the street (with rubble and glass all around them), at work with their typewriters on their laps — and they still managed to look smart.”

13. The West End: Oxford Street - Bourne & Hollingsworth Department Store

Once you've crossed Leicester Square take a right after the big clock and M&M World onto Wardour St. Follow Wardour St all the way up to Oxford St. This will be a very busy stretch of the run...be careful!

At Oxford St, look across at the Next store, housed in the grand department store building with its handsome green window panels.



This building was home to the high-end department store Bourne & Hollingsworth (shown above with the flag flying) and was hit in a night bombing raid in September 1940. The bomb which blew a huge hole in the store's interior, damaging several shop floors. Glass and debris carpeted the area. The following day staff were back at work, unfurling large Union Jack flags to cover the damaged store fronts, and soon the store was open for business. This determination to carry on in the face of difficulty became known as the "blitz spirit".

If you have 20 minutes to spare, this [wartime film](#) is a fascinating look at a day in the life of regular Londoners sharing the same bomb shelter. An employee of Bourne & Hollingsworth is featured, as is her workplace. If you are short on time, get straight to the scene showing the department store at 7 minutes 26 seconds.

14. Regents Park - aka the Home Depot



The Home Depot, Regents Park, WW1

Continue straight across Oxford St onto Berners St, left on Mortimer St, right on Langham Pl, right on Park Crescent, across Marylebone and into Regents Park. Follow along the right side of Regents Park and emerge onto the Broad Walk.

Troops were living in trenches in Flanders by December 1914 and the highlight of each day then, and until the end of the war in November 1918, was the arrival of mail from home every evening. To handle this enormous volume of mail, the General Post Office

built the Home Depot, ostensibly the largest wooden structure in the world, covering an area of 5+ acres in the park. The depot handled 5 million letters a week in 1914 and 12 million a week in 1918. By the end of the war most of the 2,500 workers at the Home Depot were women.

Regents Park was the site of the RAF AirCrew Receiving Centre for initial training during WW2. One veteran recalled that the airman's uniform meant that "We could walk into any pub in London and we never bought a single pint of beer. The people in there, that had gone through the Blitz, when they saw there were aircrew in there [they'd say] "Give them a pint."

15. Primrose Hill - Defense on the Hill

Cross the Outer Circle at the traffic light, across the canal, left to Primrose Hill.

We are used to seeing the top of Primrose Hill without trees or vegetation. But up until WW2 there were trees atop this hill. They were felled to make way for anti-aircraft guns. Primrose Hill also became home to barracks, air-raid shelters, a command post, ammunition dump, and searchlight. It is said that during dry spells



the concrete outlines of these emplacements are visible in the grass. One local noted that after the war he recalled "seeing the entrances to subterranean tunnels my older cousin tells me that dances were sometimes held in the chambers underground."

Run across Primrose Hill to the gate at St Edmund's Terrace. As we leave Primrose Hill and make our way back to Starbucks, let's remember all those who perished in war and give thanks to the courage and perseverance of those who came before us.

