

## The impact of the “economy of history”: The example of battlefield tourism in France

David Foulk

---



**Publisher**

Éditions touristiques européennes

**Electronic version**

URL: <http://tourisme.revues.org/1338>

DOI: 10.4000/tourisme.1338

ISSN: 2492-7503

**Electronic reference**

David Foulk, « The impact of the “economy of history”: The example of battlefield tourism in France », *Mondes du Tourisme* [Online], 12 | 2016, Online since 01 December 2016, connection on 30 March 2017. URL : <http://tourisme.revues.org/1338> ; DOI : 10.4000/tourisme.1338

---

This text was automatically generated on 30 March 2017.



*Mondes du tourisme* est mis à disposition selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale - Pas de Modification 4.0 International.

---

# The impact of the “economy of history”: The example of battlefield tourism in France

David Foulk

---

“Le tourisme, c’est un trésor national”

Laurent Fabius, former French Foreign Minister,  
BFMTV, 11 June 2015

- 1 The “economy of history” can be defined as history and historical monuments as a motor for economic activity, most specifically in the tourism industry. Tourism continues to hold particular interest for French public policymakers, and given the geostrategic importance of France during two world wars, battlefield tourism provides the visitor with either a destination in its own right, or a stop on a longer itinerary. Battlefield tourism has helped to provide both visitors and jobs to areas in the northern industrial heartland of France by encouraging visitors towards less traditionally frequented areas. In recent years, more visitor centres and memorials have opened across the world, including in France, than during the whole of the twentieth century (Dunkey, Morgan and Westwood, 2011, p. 860). This study will show that battlefield tourism produces tangible results which reflect positively on the French tourism industry more generally. In this centenary year of the commemoration of the Battle of Verdun, it is important to take stock of the options available to policymakers.
- 2 Tourism has already begun to attract research from a range of academic disciplines, as shown by Iles’s research (2008) into sociological aspects that motivate travellers to visit battlefields, Larique’s historical investigations (2006) and Holgun’s work (2005) on the commercial ventures in this niche market. Equally, Gondras (2012) has proven that some of the most authoritative texts on the market for historical tourism are written by the professionals themselves. However, a multitude of aspects remain to be covered, including links between battlefield tourism and other forms of historical tourism.

- 3 This paper seeks to show the impact of battlefield tourism in France. Initially, the “economy of history” must be defined before it is possible to explain the effects that it has engendered in parts of rural France. Secondly, it is necessary to know the context into which the modern French tourist industry fits as well as the role played by stakeholders in the “economy of history”. The networks formed between local professionals and the regional tourist offices are of interest in that they help to improve the visibility of these sites whilst at the same time encouraging local entrepreneurship. Finally, the impact of this industry can be discussed. It then becomes possible to analyse the effectiveness of select sites in attracting both domestic and international tourists. The paper will explore the economic outcomes that emanate from encouraging such acts of remembrance and commemoration, the most notable of these being the activity of Leger Holidays, a British company that offers escorted coach trips to battlefield sites. This will demonstrate how battlefield tourism generates revenues for companies both inside and outside French borders. Conclusions will then be drawn as to the importance of the “economy of history” in France.

## The “economy of history”

- 4 History, and its transmission, has never ceased to captivate the imagination of man. The need to connect with one’s roots is deeply ingrained within each of us. However, the manner in which this interest is expressed may take many diverse and differing forms. It is for this reason that certain people will support a particular football team, following their previous generations to the same terraces. Others may adopt certain familial customs and traditions, in order to keep the link to their past alive and vibrant.
- 5 It is with this in mind that the ultimate variable, to which we are all subject, should be introduced – emotions. However, the attempt to measure the influence of emotions upon economic actions can prove to be problematic. The development of economic theory since the eighteenth century has often disregarded this variable in favour of an attitude more fitting to the rational perfection of *homo economicus*, for it is difficult to quantify the consequences of such an unquantifiable and changeable variant. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the interdisciplinary perspective offered by the social sciences can help shed light on such a phenomenon, as was highlighted by recent academic conferences, including TRAST.<sup>1</sup>
- 6 The emotional responses of tourists have been provided with an ideal outlet in the form of a market based upon battlefield tourism. The visitors, as consumers, have made the conscious choice to use their limited resources in order to spend their holiday visiting battlefields. These are sites that have experienced great trauma and suffering yet, according to D. Lloyd (Lloyd, 1998), people choose to follow a physical or literary guide in the search of further knowledge, understanding and spirituality. Due to the development of facilities that cater to this market, quantitative analysis of the revenues received by the visitor centres becomes possible, and therefore interpretations can be made as to the economic impact and consequences of the “economy of history”.
- 7 There are three constituent parts to this motor of economic activity in France. The first constituent, as investigated in this paper, is battlefield tourism. In France, this phenomenon is historically centred on the northern frontier with Belgium, and stretches along the First World War frontline. This is not to suggest that only these battlefields

attract tourists; one can point to Alesia in the Côte d’Or, the site of Caesar’s victory against the Gauls in 52 BC, or Agincourt and Crecy during the Hundred Years’ War. In the modern era, sites such as the Normandy beaches can be considered in this vein, whilst Oradour-sur-Glane in Haute-Vienne attracts a clientele more befitting Lennon and Foley’s (2000) description of “dark tourism”.

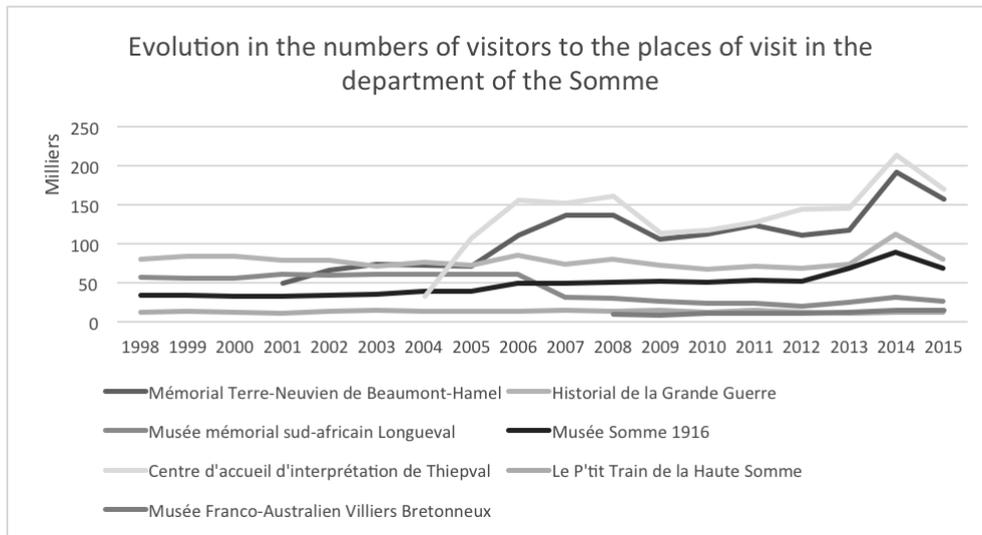
- 8 The second constituent part consists in the many monuments of France, 43,700 of which are under legislative protection, attracting a great number of tourists each year (Gondras, 2012, p. 48). These can include famous archaeological sites such as the Lascaux caves in the Dordogne as well as the multitude of chateaux found in the French countryside, such as Fontainebleau and Versailles. In addition, aristocratic residences are being converted into luxury hotels, spas and hunting venues, Château de la Verrerie in the Cher being an example of the latter. Despite recent works by Gondras (2012), further research is needed in order to provide firmer conclusions as to the true impact of these attractions upon the local and national economy of France.
- 9 Finally, dating from the 1980s there has been an increased interest in France for historical reconstruction. In towns and villages across the country, including Castillon-la-Bataille<sup>2</sup> in the Gironde, the site of the final battle of the Hundred Years’ War in 1453, local associations put on shows that attract tourists and locals alike. These reconstructions generally rely upon the benevolence of volunteers to provide their time and acting talents as well as their help in the construction of sets, costumes and production. The success of these shows has been reflected in the fortunes of the Puy du Fou<sup>3</sup> theme park in the Vendée. In 1977, its creators, Philippe de Villiers and Jean Saint-Bris, decided to write a show that focused on the life of the local Maupillier family, which spans six centuries. Historical reconstructions and monuments are, however, to remain objects for further study at this time.

## Battlefield tourism and France

- 10 According to governmental statistics, France is, and has been since 1990, the most popular world destination for international tourists. The hospitality and tourist industries represent 7.4% of GDP,<sup>4</sup> resulting in a significant proportion of the population relying upon its continued presence to survive and to thrive in the French economy. Within this, battlefield tourism as a distinct form of touristic activity has a history that encompasses both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Throughout history, spectators and military observers have followed behind the ranks of combatants in order to observe, report and testify to the horrors of war, most markedly following the invention of photography and long-distance telegraph, which allowed for the rapid transmission of information from reporter to reader. This had precedence in France during the 1870 siege of Paris by the Prussian army, whereby English and Americans were solicited through advertisements offering apartments for rent (Horne, 2012; E-book loc. 1453, 15%). However, the objectives of these contemporary observers and battlefield tourists remain similar – the search for further knowledge. The scale of the mobilisation led to greater and more personal connections for the peoples of the warring nations, notably through the loss of a generation of young men. This in turn encouraged the memorialisation movement, best explained in the seminal works of J. Winter (1985), which led to a general call for the installation of monuments, thus creating a form of attraction around which those left behind could channel their grief as well as for those

mourning their lost family members, or for those former combatants seeking to remember their comrades.

- 11 The WWI battlefields of northern France are situated on a major European crossing-point, a frontier that is still heavily traversed each year. With the influxes of tourists, entrepreneurs are gifted opportunities to provide services, and it is from a commercial perspective that this paper shall initially look at battlefield tourism. This form of tourism is of particular importance to the area of the Vallée de la Haute Somme, as can be seen by the six different museums counted in surveys of the area's tourist activity – all of which use the First World War as their subject.
- 12 Using statistics collected by the local tourist offices in the area, and at each of the attractions, a table has been collated to show the number of visits recorded at 7 sites over a period of 17 years from 1998 to 2015.<sup>5</sup> Figures are partial because certain sites did not exist at the beginning of the period in question, for instance the Visitor Centre at Thiepval. As can be seen in Figure 1, the general trend at four of the attractions has remained relatively unchanged, namely the Historial de la Grande Guerre, the Musée Somme 1916, the P'tit Train de la Haute Somme and the Musée Franco-Australien. Two attractions have managed to surpass the others – the Mémorial Terre-Neuvien de Beaumont Hamel and the Visitor Centre at Thiepval. Both attractions reached peak attendance in 2014, receiving respectively 192,766 and 214,146 visitors. Incidentally, the month of October 2014 was the busiest month for both attractions. This suggests that battlefield tourists travel outside of periods of high touristic influx, possibly to take advantage of cheaper accommodation prices. Furthermore, both attractions experienced large falls in their visitor numbers in 2009, 21.9% at the Memorial Terre-Neuvien and 29.5% at the Visitor Centre at Thiepval. This drop could be explained by difficulties in the tourism sector following the economic downturn worldwide in 2008, which in turn led to fewer international tourists visiting the sites.
- 13 Prior to the centenary commemorations in 2014, visitor numbers to the majority of the museums were on a stable trajectory, improving their frequentation year upon year but only very steadily, apart from the Musée et Mémorial Sud-Africain which saw a fall between 2006 and 2007. However, thanks to the commemorations, most sites saw a large increase in their statistics. This improvement seems to be reflected in the numbers of hotel rooms booked in the Somme. Since 2012, following a drop of 2%, a recovery has been underway and 2015 saw the largest number of arrivals in the hotels. With an average of 23.4% of bookings coming from international tourists, clearly the attractions in this region appeal to a foreign clientele.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1. Evolution in visitor numbers at the attractions in Vallée de la Haute Somme 1998–2015**

DATA COMPILED FROM [HTTP://WWW.PICARDIETOURISME-ACTEURS.COM/VOS-OUTILS/CHIFFRES-CLES-ET-ETUDES/BILANS-DE-FREQUEUTATION-TOURISTIQUE/SOMME](http://www.picardietourisme-acteurs.com/vos-outils/chiffres-cles-et-etudes/bilans-de-frequeutation-touristique/somme).

## The importance of stakeholders to the “economy of history”

- 14 France’s long history has provided the backdrop upon which an entire industry has been created and exploited. Each battle, every monument and different historical protagonists have provided local communities with a product that can be utilized by the various stakeholders. However, not all sites are created equal and certain sites attract more visitors than others, as has been seen. For a study of the true impact of battlefield tourism on the local economy to hold true, further efforts need to be taken to bring to light those stakeholders, be they owners of hotels and restaurants in the surrounding areas, their staffs, owners of small commercial enterprises offering guides, or travel agents in the traditional sense as well as their digital equivalents. These stakeholders should not be limited to those who solely make their living directly from the receipts of tourist revenues. The term “stakeholder” must also include those members of the community who are involved in the secondary services to which tourists are attracted, for example, the local supermarkets. These members of communities are not necessarily financially recompensed, yet all help to drive an important constituent of France’s national wealth. As has been duly noted by scholars (Raboteur, 2000, p. 7), the economics of tourism has, in general, failed to attract much academic interest. Historical tourism, and the impact that this phenomenon can have upon local economies, has also fallen victim to this same neglect.
- 15 If the analysis of J.-L. Caccamo is adopted, regarding the market for the tourist industry, the price of the product is heavily influenced by the traditional demand-side considerations including quality, taste and revenue, as well as supply-side factors relating to the cost of production as well as fiscal policy (Caccamo, 2007, p. 19). The importance of a favourable governmental policy, one which fosters and aids the development of resorts and attractions, becomes evident. The French Interior Ministry accords great significance

to the impact of the tourist industry on the national economy; indeed, it affirms that France holds a positive balance of trade in this sector of €10.3 billion.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is of national and international interest to know more about this industry, which is so vital to the economic fate of the country.

- 16 Using the statistics provided by the French General Department of Enterprises covering the years 2005–2012, shown in Table 1, it can be seen that an increasing number of businesses have been entering the tourism marketplace in general. Although certain years of the surveys are missing, notably data relating to 2008, conclusions can still be drawn regarding the health of the French tourism industry. Following the economic downturn in 2008, increased efforts by central government to encourage entrepreneurial activity seem to have translated into stable growth, in particular in the accommodation sector. The large increase in the numbers of restaurants over the period could be a perverse consequence of the economic crisis. By aggravating existing structural weaknesses in France’s employment market, the crisis led to large numbers of people being encouraged to start their own businesses. This was facilitated by the creation of a new form of business entity, the *autoentrepreneur*, under the *Loi sur la modernisation de l’économie*, passed on 4 August 2008 (Hagège and Masson, 2010). However, as can be seen by the seemingly incongruous result for the numbers of restaurants in 2011, a drop of 49,820 on the previous year, those who started businesses under this model did not necessarily survive the difficulties that emerged from the tightening of commercial credit (European Commission, 2009), twinned with the equally high employment and social charges. This fall came in spite of the lowering of VAT to 5.5% undertaken in 2009.<sup>8</sup> The increasing numbers of travel agencies following 2009 could reflect the widespread adoption in France of the technological advances linked to the Internet, thereby allowing more varied options for those entrepreneurs looking to exploit this medium. In light of these statistics, it seems evident that questions should be asked relating to the part played by these businesses, their workforce and the entrepreneurs who have driven this growth.

**Table 1. Businesses in the French tourism industry, 2005–2012**

Year	Number of businesses	Accommodation	Restaurants	Bars and cafés	Travel agents
2006	196,429	39,863	108,340	43,909	4,317
2007	203,457	40,543	116,544	41,957	4,313
2008	196,850	33,879	112,221	41,487	4,263
2010	227,802	35,412	136,702	50,363	5,325
2012	237,434	36,143	147,099	48,223	5,969
2013	273,494	41,295	97,279	45,079	6,396
2014	285,846	44,868	152,737	44,167	4,857

Table compiled from data found on [www.entreprises.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques/chiffres-cles-tourisme](http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques/chiffres-cles-tourisme).

- 17 Until now, the links between local business and battlefield tourism have proven obscure. However, and in large part due to the centenary commemorations, these links have been highlighted by the regional tourist offices, firstly to maximise both the visibility of local

trade, and secondly to encourage the transmission of the past. At Péronne, the Historial de la Grande Guerre, an award-winning museum<sup>9</sup> dedicated to the Battle of the Somme, is leading the way in underlining the historical interest amongst shops and other forms of business. The exhibition of photos of 20 Péronnais business owners to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Historial – *20 Ans, 20 Commerçants* – shows both the support for, and the necessity of, such attractions in the local economy. Café owner, butcher, engraver, shoe-seller, photographer – diverse tradespeople take an interest in the promotion of their communities. One could suggest that this has been motivated, in part, by self-interest, as a thriving town attracts more visitors and the virtuous cycle continues. On the other hand, it becomes clear that sites linked to the battlefield are one of the few attractions in this predominantly agricultural landscape far from the cities in the locality, such as Amiens or Arras. The captions that accompany each photograph offer an opportunity to explain the personal connection between the subject and the object they hold, all picked from the museum's collection. The contact details and opening hours of their respective businesses are indicated, along with the supporters of the project such as the European Union, the French local and central governments and media groups. This support is echoed by other business owners, linked directly to the tourist market in the locality. The four campsites and multiplicity of hotels that surround Péronne help to cater for the different nationalities which cross France's Northern (Nord) region, principally Belgian, Dutch, German and British. The development opportunities that these businesses generate have allowed for the creation of employment, in particular in the food, beverage and hospitality industries. Some of the tradespeople talked of the doubling of their enterprises to cope with growing demand.<sup>10</sup> It appears that history, and battlefields in particular, can indeed be seen as drivers for the local economy in northern France.

- 18 Stakeholders play an important part in any analysis of a given market. When one thinks of battlefield tourism, the tourist themselves and the tour operator are the first that come to mind. However, there are numerous others who operate in this sector; some are salaried, whereas some offer their time charitably. These employees can include the staff of visitor centres, the guides employed either by tour operators or by local public-sector institutions such as the tourist office, transport companies operating coach trips, or even private rental agencies.
- 19 In the areas that have been touched by battles of the First World War, tourism offers a boost for local employment, especially when considering the closing of the last French coal mines at the turn of the new millennium in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais mining basin. Therefore, the restaurant owners and local shop owners must be considered as forms of tertiary stakeholders, who operate not simply to cater for the demands of the battlefield tourists, but who are nonetheless beneficiaries of their custom. These stakeholders offer their professional expertise and their local knowledge to battlefield tourists, as was highlighted in the *20 Ans, 20 Commerçants* exhibition at Péronne. Those who run and work in these establishments are reliant upon the economy of history, as such services are tied to the passing trade that is offered by the battlefield tourists.
- 20 Tourists use many different forms of transportation to arrive at their chosen destination. This is highlighted in the publicity produced by the regional tourist boards, offering prepared automobile routes, complete with road-signing, as can be seen in Figure 2. Equally, walking guides and maps have been produced by companies including the well-respected Michelin guides. These comprehensive maps of the battlefields have been published since 1917, at the same time as the combat raged. They have, nevertheless,

been completely updated to include events and routes introduced for the centenary commemorations.

Figure 2. Local signposting of tourist route, Péronne, Somme, 9 August 2016



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

- 21 In order to foster closer links between local trade and the historical attractions, a scheme has been implemented following a coordinated effort by four regional actors: the Historial de la Grande Guerre, Sommetourisme, the Musée Somme 1916 and the Chamber of Commerce for Amiens-Picardie. The aim was to form a network of professionals who could encourage the battlefield tourists to make better use of the services on offer in the locality. These include restaurateurs, tourist offices, transportation professionals, accommodation professionals, and the sites themselves. Their membership is indicated by a red and green logo of a poppy that is affixed to the front of the establishment. What this signifies is that the member will provide practical information for the tourist relating to the battlefield sites and their environs, thereby allowing the tourist to make the most of their visit, and at the same time allowing the professional to indicate the presence of fellow members. One form of encouragement given to the tourist is a book of coupons that offers discounts to museums in the area. This offers an incentive whilst providing information that might otherwise have gone unseen. Nonetheless, this model is not limited to the area around the Somme. Similar partnerships exist in other areas of northern France and Belgium, such as the Northern France Battlefield Partner scheme, the Passeurs de Mémoire in the Aisne, and the 2014–18 Remembrance Partner Scheme around Flanders fields.

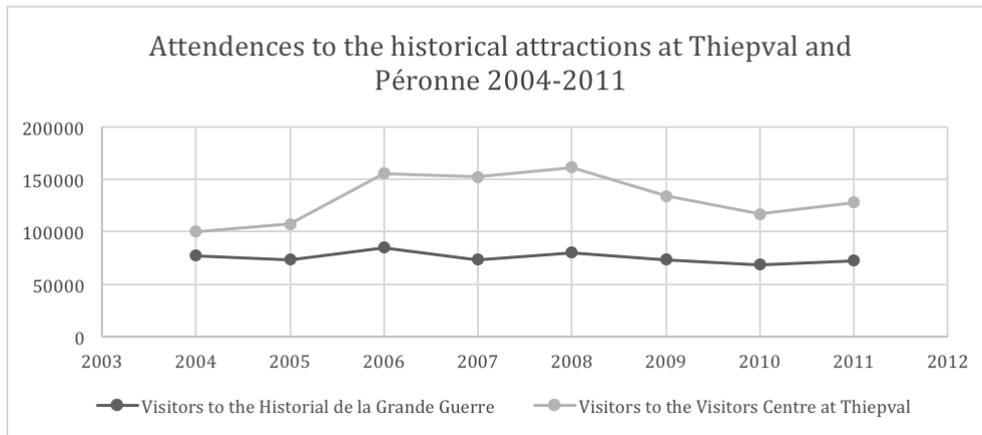
## Memorialisation and its central role in the “economy of history”

- 22 The industrialisation of war left indelible marks on the French countryside and therefore allowed for the development of memorialisation and the subsequent transformation of the landscape into an object of attraction for the tourist in its own right. Prior to this,

memorialisation was reserved for the elites. This process of societally internalising the events of the past became something opened up to all who gave their life, regardless of country of birth or position in life. However, with the passing of the veterans, memorialisation began to take on a different meaning. Whereas those involved did not need reminding of the causes of the war, subsequent generations risked losing the messages that had been learnt with the blood, sweat and sacrifice of their elders. Memorialisation became highly implicated in the transmission of these messages in an effort to try and avoid further carnage.

- 23 As this study focuses upon the financial implications of battlefield tourism, the flourishing of support for memorial projects for the First World War in the north of France since the beginning of the twenty-first century holds special importance, as is attested by the founding of visitor centres. The small village of Thiepval, 30 kilometres from Péronne, is at the forefront of efforts to encourage the remembrance of the 945,000 French, German and British soldiers who lost their lives during the battles of the Somme, which took place during 1916 and continued into 1917. There are two closely linked attractions that aid in the transmission of knowledge about this traumatic event.
- 24 The Historial de la Grande Guerre, housed in the Château de Péronne,<sup>11</sup> houses over 70,000 pieces relating to the First World War and stages temporary exhibitions that focus on different aspects of the war, notably a reconstruction of a Saint-Chamand tank, alongside its permanent trilingual displays. This approach offers the tourist a truly comparative approach, allowing the war to be seen from the perspectives of the different nationalities involved in the fighting. The Historial is twinned with the Franco-British Memorial and Visitor Centre at Thiepval. This memorial was constructed between 1928 and 1932 from the designs by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the prolific British architect previously commissioned to plan New Delhi and the Cenotaph in London. The Franco-British Memorial is inscribed with the names of the 72,205 British and South African servicemen declared missing-in-action and who have no recorded grave.<sup>12</sup> Their names form a sombre banner, etched onto the 16 pillars that support the 45-metre-high arch. The visitor centre, which was initially launched in 1998 and led by Sir Frank Sanderson, grew from a collective feeling that the existing facilities were inadequate to fulfil their *raison d'être* of welcoming and educating those who came to visit the site. The project was built upon an Anglo-French collaboration to raise funds, and was finished in 2004, opening its doors to visitors the same year. The Le Corbusier-inspired structure houses a permanent exhibition, which was recently expanded with the addition of a 60-metre-long monumental fresco, drawn by the artist and journalist Joe Sacco, depicting the first day of the Battle of the Somme.<sup>13</sup> The memorial and the cemetery that surround it are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, funded proportionally by the governments of the Commonwealth nations relative to the number of graves.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 3. Graphical representation of attendances to the historical attractions at Thiepval and Péronne, 2004–2011**



ILLUSTRATION, BY THE AUTHOR, BASED ON STATISTICS IN ANNEX 3.

- 25 As we can see in Figure 3, for the period 2004–2011 the number of visitors to these cultural sites has fluctuated, both positively and negatively, and nor were the visitor numbers equally distributed between the two attractions. The Historial was consistently less frequented when compared to the Visitor Centre, most notably in the year 2008, with a difference of 80,859. It can be reasonably argued that this has been caused by the imposition of an entry fee at the Historial for access to its wider-ranging collection of artefacts. This entry fee of €7.50 for adults, and €3.80 for concessions, is clearly sufficient to drive a number of battlefield tourists towards its free-to-enter sister institution, even when one takes into account the discount on offer from the Somme Battlefields' Partner scheme. As was explained by Raboteur, price is a major contributory factor in the demand for attractions (Raboteur, 2000, p. 29). However, when considering the Historial, visitors are still prepared to pay for the attraction, despite being offered an alternative at no cost. It is not possible to categorise battlefield tourism in terms of the effects of being a Veblen product, a bandwagon effect or any form of snob effect (Dwyer, Forsyth and Dwyer, 2011, p. 40). The price of entry is neither too high to be prohibitive, nor are the numbers of visitors sufficient to suggest a bandwagon effect in progress. This suggests that there are further factors that need to be taken into account when considering cultural attractions and their economic consequences, namely emotion in this case. This concept causes great difficulty to the social scientist, for emotion is difficultly quantifiable. However, it would be disingenuous to suggest that the choice of destination was not linked intrinsically to what the traveller seeks to gain from their holiday. The pursuit of historical knowledge and emotional connection provide the draw to battlefield tourists, and these cannot be attributed to other activities available in this formerly industrial area. In large part, people visit the area for the battlefields and this predominance is demonstrated in the literature published by the tourist offices. It must be acknowledged that great stock is placed in these historical attractions by the local community, despite the nature of the draw. Nevertheless, the pricing policy of the Historial seems to be successful in attracting visitors, as three quarters are prepared to pay the cost of entry to the museum.
- 26 When further pieces of data are considered, including the nationalities of the visitors, we begin to see a different picture emerging. The Historial welcomes a large percentage of its visitors from inside the *Hexagone* itself (70%), with only 30% of its clients coming from

abroad.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that French tourists are more prepared to pay to partake in the exhibitions. It is likely that there is commercial reasoning behind this. Considering that 90% of those travelling to the Visitor Centre at Thiepval are British, and when considered alongside Iles's findings relating to her own experiences on a guided battlefield tour (Iles, 2008, pp. 138–154), we can imagine that a large proportion will have come as part of an organised commercial tour (Iles, 2008, p. 142). With a limited amount of time in which to visit the monuments, the aim of these companies is to condense the information housed within the museum by the use of an experienced tour guide, thereby allowing their clients to acquire this knowledge without the additional time needed to tour the museum itself. However, this presumption does not entirely reflect reality as many British tourists do indeed come individually, and they integrate their visits to the battlefields into a wider travel itinerary. Domestic tourists are not necessarily subject to the same time constraints as their foreign counterparts and they can therefore opt to see the museum without resorting to the expense of hiring a tour guide. This may explain the difference in the numbers of domestic and international visitors coming to these attractions.

- 27 The narrowing of visitor numbers between the Visitor Centre at Thiepval and the Historial could plausibly indicate the wide-reaching impact of the financial crisis that began in 2008. As can be seen in Figure 2, the Historial, more frequented by French visitors, saw a lower percentage fall in visitors of 10.2% between 2008 and 2011. The Visitor Centre at Thiepval saw a greater drop in attendances over the same period, with a fall of 20.9%. This suggests that the mostly British clientele were choosing not to use guided tours to the Visitor Centre in the same numbers as before. Whilst the numbers of French customers to the Historial did decline, the significance of the change was much less statistically pronounced.
- 28 However, it must be recognized that, whilst the aims of the two sites remain the same – that is to say, to educate and to remember – the way in which they meet their aims are very different. The Historial at Péronne is a museum in the traditional sense of the term, a place to collect and to put objects on public display; the Visitor Centre and memorial at Thiepval is a place of commemoration and a site for collective memorialisation. This means that they appeal to different audiences. The memorial at Thiepval seeks to impress the visitor by its size; it is predominantly a place for remembrance of the British servicemen who died, and thus offers more limited appeal than its sister institution. The Historial at Péronne takes a much less partisan approach, by offering the permanent trilingual exhibition, and exhibits from all the countries involved in order to reflect the realities of the war in their geographic context, taking the visitor on a tactile tour of the events. Whereas the only thing required to appreciate the Franco-British Memorial at Thiepval is a walk around, the Historial and its many exhibits do not necessarily tell their story immediately, thereby requiring more time to experience, especially the audio-visual and tactile computer technology implemented since its refurbishment in 2016.
- 29 Another site that fits into the paying model is the Mémorial de Verdun.<sup>16</sup> This museum, situated in the town of Verdun in the *département* of the Meuse, has been closed to the public for renovation since September 2014, yet is a site that has attracted large numbers of visitors ever since it opened in 1967. Designed by the architects M. Bidault and C. Legrand, the structure houses 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space devoted to the history of the costly Franco-German battle in 1916. As we can see from the statistics of those who visited the museum, a mean average of 109,582 during the period 2006–2013,<sup>17</sup> there were more tourists enticed to visit this memorial. This could be explained by the relative ages of the

sites. The Mémorial de Verdun is much older and therefore more established than its counterpart. Equally, the site of this memorial is in France; there are therefore many more families affected, and whose descendants are within the range of viable travel. Verdun is a larger town than Péronne, both in demography and the number of attractions – according to INSEE, for the year 2013, 19,144 inhabitants lived in Verdun,<sup>18</sup> whereas 8,142 people were recorded for Péronne.<sup>19</sup> Verdun has become a centre for battlefield tourism and related activities, including a special bus service to take tourists to the different positions along the line, and a subterranean fort dating from the sixteenth century that housed both men and material during the battles nearby. The ferocity of the fighting attracted attention as soon as the fighting ceased, with numerous cities granting honours to the town for the bravery of its inhabitants. It has therefore gained more exposure amongst tourists and, arguably more importantly, in the press. The Mémorial de Verdun has featured in publications such as the magazine *Batailles*, in May 2010, as well as in the local newspaper *L'Est Républicain*, in May 2011. Whilst the readership of these publications may be limited, *L'Est Républicain* prints 134,775 copies on average each month;<sup>20</sup> the publications reach a regional audience above all. A national memorial nearby, the Ossuary of Douaumont, served as a backdrop to the night of television programmes devoted to commemorations of Verdun,<sup>21</sup> on 29 May 2016. This form of mass publicity allows the site and the nearby town to remain in the public consciousness. Although the promotion of tourism is not a new phenomenon, it can be argued that, in the aftermath of the economic downturn, domestic demand is of renewed importance to policymakers, as has been demonstrated by the comments of Laurent Fabius, the former French Foreign Minister, in the citation that opened this article.

- 30 This leads back to the main premise of this paper: the impact that these domestic and international tourists have upon the community around which their interests are centred, and the way in which battlefield tourism also generates revenues for companies both inside and outside French borders. The issue will be examined on multiple levels, beginning with the sites themselves, followed by the investments that have been effected to bring them to their current positions, and then moving on to the national level by analyzing the numbers of employers and employees involved in the tourist industry as a whole and considering an example of how the demand for tourism in France can help support business overseas.

## The impact of battlefield tourism

- 31 In order to better understand the impact of battlefield tourism, different variables can be investigated. The first concrete measure that can be seen is the local employment, for not all stakeholders are self-employed and must look for employment. At Verdun, the regional committee for tourism has published statistics on the economic boons created by tourism. From their statistics (Observatoire Lorrain du Tourisme, 2016, pp. 12–14), stating that 36.6% of the 82,000 workers in this industry are employed in Lorraine, it can be calculated that 30,012 are employed in tourism. Considering that the Ossuary of Douaumont is the fifth most visited site in this area, these positive effects of battlefield tourism can be seen more clearly.
- 32 Secondly, with regard to the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne, it is essential to ensure that revenue calculations are effected for these attractions, as they have such a significant economic impact on the local economy. If a low-end estimate of the gross

revenues accumulated by the Historial de la Grande Guerre is produced, without deducting for the cost of overheads, it can be calculated that the attraction made €275,044, using 2011 data. Equally, being more optimistic and assuming that every visitor was paying the maximum tariff of €7.50, it can be estimated that €542,850 was taken from paying tourists. In reality, it can be assumed that the actual receipts for these two sites were somewhere in between these two estimates.

- 33 These sites help to illustrate the collective spending power of those tourists who visit memorial centres. It can be said that the higher the demand created by the tourists, the more opportunities for entrepreneurship to flourish. At the most basic level, it is for this reason that the number of businesses involved in the tourist industry in France has been increasing since 2006, with over 900,000 jobs provided nationally in this sector.<sup>22</sup> However, when considering the large numbers of tourists who come to France each year, 84.7 million in 2013, it is apparent that the vast majority do not necessarily come with the intention of partaking in battlefield tourism.
- 34 Nevertheless, significant investment has been injected into structures catering for this niche market, especially since the end of the 1990s, and accelerating from the beginning of the twenty-first century. This investment has been both pecuniary and physical, taking the form of monetary donations as well as the time spent campaigning to make these structures more visible to the public. More than 2,000 financial gifts helped to fund the creation of the Visitor Centre at Thiepval. Moreover, they came from individuals, including the benefactor who gave £1 for each name on the memorial, or the £5,000 gift received from the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. Other donations were gifted by trusts, such as the Dulverton Trust which donated £25,000, together with private companies, including HSBC, British American Tobacco and Unilever. Local and national government helped by donating, including the £40,000 received from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. A significant proportion was financed by the European Union, and the expertise of different organizations, including the Imperial War Museum and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, was put at the disposal of the campaign. Eurotunnel offered its own support to the project by allowing free travel to members of the commission. In total, the amount raised by the EU, the General Council of the Somme and the CAF Thiepval Project came to £1,906,000, or €2,647,000.<sup>23</sup>
- 35 Due to their philanthropic nature, these donations cannot be treated as traditional economic products, for this expenditure serves no quantifiable human need other than the desire to perpetuate the memory of a historic event. The act of giving can therefore be qualified as playing an important part in the economics of emotion, for it relies entirely upon the moral character of a given economic actor in order to take place. This fusion of both history and emotion in the economic context is a self-perpetuating phenomenon that is unlikely to be halted, considering man's insatiable desire for knowledge of the past and of the darker elements of life, as well as death.
- 36 A central element of economic activity is the search for profit. Battlefield tourism has attracted a number of entrepreneurs offering specialized tours, such as those formerly offered by Major Holt, prior to the acquisition of Holt's Battlefield Tours by Leger Holidays in 2014. Across France, Leger Holidays organises trips to many different sites relating to both the First and Second World Wars.<sup>24</sup> Leger's accounts show that, despite a relatively modest cash turnover of £156,282, the company Leger Holidays Ltd records assets of £5.3 million alongside liabilities of £3.3 million, with a net worth of £2 million.<sup>25</sup> The fact that this company is still trading, 36 years after its creation in 1979, stands

testament to the business opportunities afforded to entrepreneurs ready to participate in the market for escorted coach holidays. Their initial forays into the niche sector of battlefield tours came in the early 2000s and concentrated on the Western Front during World War One, and the D-Day landings in Normandy.<sup>26</sup> These holidays have since become a mainstay in their portfolio, which has grown to over 45 tours, encompassing wars from different epochs. The customer base that makes use of Leger Holidays is predominantly centred in the UK; however, a number of overseas clients do find out about the tours thanks to the Internet and word of mouth. The age and cultural demographic of visitors is incredibly broad, and ranges from veterans to couples, schoolchildren to all-male groups. As has been underlined by Iles (2008), and subsequently reiterated by Leger Holidays, the primary motivation for undertaking these trips is primarily historical, either to visit specific memorials or to undertake familial research. A number of criteria are used by the company when selecting the local amenities used during their coach trips. The first is proximity: hotels and restaurants need to be located centrally in relation to the areas being visited. The second is quality: generally, Leger use three-star accommodation as the standard is in keeping with their desire to please customers, yet at the same time this impacts on the holidays' running costs. Understandably, cost and standards are of paramount importance, as they hold the key to attracting customers, ensuring that these become return clients and that they will be predisposed to recommend Leger to their friends and family. Moreover, significant responsibility is accorded to the guides, both in terms of satisfying the customer, but also in designing the individual routes. The tour guides are generally the best informed regarding offers available for larger parties in their localities, and it is therefore they who decide where the group should eat at lunch, as the hotels are used purely on a bed-and-breakfast basis. The chief battlefield guide is the designer of the itineraries offered by Leger Holidays. This therefore offers scope for the adoption of tours based on relevant anniversaries or customer feedback. However, tours are being constantly refreshed, revised and rerouted. The itinerary “Set Europe Ablaze: SOE, SAS and the French Resistance” followed a route that led to the south-west of France; the tour was introduced in 2012 but dropped at the end of 2014. This form of renewal allows the company to offer a service to clients whose historical interests are diverse yet who wish to follow the format of a guided coach tour, and therefore see a maximum of sites in a limited period of time. As has been noted, Leger were not the first to offer battlefield tours, and their success in the sector of guided coach tours led them into this niche market. Their acquisition of Holt's Battlefield Tours in 2014 marked an end to this particular commercial conflict. The recent spate of anniversaries of both the First and Second World Wars has attracted other tour operators to offer a number of basic tours, but Leger are still identified as the leading specialist in this domain by the diversity of their trips. Their work, by the offering of battlefield tours, helps towards the process of memorialisation and remembrance. The school parties that they transport and the university research they aid help to accelerate the transmission of knowledge relating to this period. However, as a company, Leger Holidays are well aware that, from a commercial standpoint, it is this interest from the public that enables them to continue trading. They should therefore be qualified as important actors in the economy of history.

## Conclusions

- 37 As has been shown, the importance of the tourism industry to France is vital both for its economy as well as towards its development in the cultural sphere, and is one in which France has led for many years. Tourism is a motor that attracts both entrepreneurial effort as well as encouraging the restoration of historic sites and the enlargement of the country's cultural heritage. Battlefield tourism, as a niche market in this sector, has encouraged the reinvention of certain areas of the country that were prime examples of deindustrialisation. This has allowed them to capitalize upon their historic past and for tourism to flourish. This successful conversion is the mark of a true “post-industrial society”, to use the term popularized by Bell (1976). It is only fitting that the destructive power of the deadly arms and machines from the industrial era should be the precursor for a further transformation in the French countryside, from an industrial heartland into a tourist attraction. Nevertheless, a fuller investigation into the costs and benefits that impact upon the local population is required, at least in terms of economic and social considerations.
- 38 The “economy of history”, history as a motor for economic activity, utilises natural inquisitiveness as a means of supporting itself financially. If consumers did not feel the need to frequent museums and visitor centres, this market would cease to function and numerous attractions would have to close their doors to the public. Despite tax exemptions, donations of time and manpower, as well as support from both local and national government, when considering the very high barriers to entry, cultural tourism is often far from the minds of most entrepreneurs. However, as has been shown by the successful ventures of Leger Holidays, profit is indeed there to be earned by those willing to take the risk. This raises important questions as to the need for innovation in the historical tourism sector, both in France and internationally. Equally, the introduction of new technology in the museum experience is already underway, filtering through at the Historial de la Grande Guerre following its recent refurbishment. Such improvements are already being made, yet they merely help to add to the ever-increasing costs involved in operating a visitor centre. These do not simply include the maintenance and upkeep of the site and the exhibitions, but also include those funds allocated to financing further academic research, and projects for younger students. However, such undertakings are not simply beneficial pedagogically and nor is the benefit exclusive to the visitor who attends these attractions; they also benefit the historical and cultural heritage of France as a whole. It has been argued that battlefield tourism is a self-perpetuating phenomenon, as donations to the Visitor Centre at Thiepval included the names of Major and Mrs Holt as representatives of the first generation of entrepreneurs in the “economy of history” following the Second World War.
- 39 The part played by the different stakeholders in this economy is varied and wide-ranging, stretching from those directly linked to the visits of the tourists themselves to those whose businesses are helped by the presence of tourists yet who are not entirely reliant upon their custom. The networks that have been created with the input of stakeholders offer a means to increase their visibility amongst the tourists whilst, at the same time, helping to educate and enlighten the visitors as to the local cultural heritage nearby. It is in part thanks to such schemes including the Somme Battlefields' Partner scheme that connections between local business and the attractions have multiplied and thrived, as

demonstrated by the exhibition *20 Ans, 20 Commerçants*. It is equally clear that there was a significant increase in visits to sites around the Somme at the beginning of the centenary celebrations in 2014, which, although slightly falling in 2015, looks set to be repeated in 2016. However, it remains to be seen whether recent events in France, which have begun to be felt in the tourist sector, will have a notable effect on battlefield tourism.

- 40 In order to fully understand the scope of the “economy of history” in France, further investigation needs to be conducted into the two remaining constituent parts, namely monuments and châteaux as well as the newly developing niche of historical theme parks and the more interactive historical “experience”. These types of attractions have helped to cement the reputation of France as being amongst the most sought-after and royally approved of destinations, as demonstrated by the 2015 visit of King Salman of Saudi Arabia to Château de l’Horizon at Vallauris.<sup>27</sup> Such research would allow for a clearer image to be formed as to the state of the French historical tourism industry, and thereby provide indications for future work, as has been called for by both professionals and academics.

## Annexes

### Annex 1. Occupation of hotel rooms in the Somme – Accommodation survey by INSEE

Year	Rooms occupied	% of foreign visitors	No. of arrivals	No. of nights occupied
2008	55.10%	24%	566,802	872,989
2009	57.90%	29%	519,767	785,775
2010	56.60%	26.90%	551,833	871,833
2011	59.70%	25.00%	570,512	884,342
2012	57.70%	22.60%	451,804	702,052
2013	55.40%	23.10%	546,212	855,228
2014	54.10%	22.40%	589,440	877,021
2015	55.40%	22.70%	605,190	889,099

SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.PICARDIETOURISME-ACTEURS.COM/VOS-OUTILS/CHIFFRES-CLES-ET-ETUDES/BILANS-DE-FREQUENTATION-TOURISTIQUE/SOMME](http://www.picardietourisme-acteurs.com/vos-outils/chiffres-cles-et-etudes/bilans-de-frequentation-touristique/somme)

### Annex 2. Evolution in the numbers of visitors to attractions in the Vallée de la Haute Somme, 1998–2015

Year	Mémorial Terre-Neuvien de Beaumont-Hamel	Historial de la Grande Guerre	Musée Mémorial Sud-Africain Longueval	Musée Somme 1916	Centre d’accueil d’interprétation de Thiepval	Le P’tit Train de la Haute Somme	Musée de la Ville de Br...
1998		80,751	57,036	33,776		13,445	
1999		84,894	56,065	34,591		13,592	

2000		84,762	56,044	33,060		13,144	
2001	50,143	79,776	61,013	32,542		11,200	
2002	66,330	80,175	59,785	34,765		13,839	
2003	74,198	72,324	61,275	35,653		16,027	
2004	73,736	76,961	61,325	38,774	32,406	14,046	
2005	71,788	73,094	61,984	39,375	107,134	13,889	
2006	111,169	85,768	62,068	49,806	155,509	14,059	
2007	137,040	74,030	32,242	49,560	152,206	15,265	
2008	136,860	80,538	30,188	51,111	161,570	13,520	10,
2009	106,882	73,551	27,233	51,843	113,987	15,220	9,6
2010	113,108	68,519	24,453	51,263	116,892	12,536	11,
2011	123,694	72,380	23,729	53,334	127,802	15,630	12,
2012	110,994	69,043	20,898	51,504	144,279	12,629	12,
2013	118,053	75,240	25,439	69,106	145,514	11,949	13,
2014	192,766	113,659	31,394	89,834	214,146	13,305	15,
2015	158,078	80,775	26,759	69,106	169,640	12,893	16,

TABLE COMPILED FROM DATA FOUND ON [HTTP://WWW.PICARDIETOURISME-ACTEURS.COM/VOS-OUTILS/CHIFFRES-CLES-ET-ETUDES/BILANS-DE-FREQUENTATION-TOURISTIQUE/SOMME](http://www.picardietourisme-acteurs.com/vos-outils/chiffres-cles-et-etudes/bilans-de-frequentation-touristique/somme).

### Annex 3. Number of visitors recorded at the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne and the Visitor Centre at Thiepval, 2004–2011

Year	Visitors to the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne	Visitors to the Visitor Centre at Thiepval
2004	77,000	100,000
2005	74,000	107,200
2006	85,500	155,500
2007	74,000	152,000
2008	80,641	161,500
2009	73,551	134,000
2010	68,519	116,753
2011	72,380	127,802

SOURCE: PRESS KIT – [HTTP://WWW.HISTORIAL.ORG/](http://www.historial.org/)

- 41 Josquin Barre, *Vendre le tourisme culturel. Guide méthodologique*, Paris, Éditions Economica, 1995, 316p.
- 42 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society*, New York, Basic Books (New Ed ed.), 1976, 618p.

- 43 Françoise Benhamou, *Économie du patrimoine culturel*, Paris, La Découverte, 2012, coll. “Les Repères/Culture et communication”, 126p.
- 44 Jean-Louis Caccamo, *Fondements d'économie du tourisme. Acteurs, marchés, stratégies*, Brussels, De Boeck, 2007, 225p.
- 45 Daniel Clary, *Le tourisme dans l'espace français*, Paris, Masson, 1993, 358p.
- Ria Dunkley, Nigel Morgan and Sheena Westwood, “Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism”, *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 2011, pp. 860–868.
- Larry Dwyer, Peter Forsyth and Wayne Dwyer, *Tourism Economics and Policy*, London, Channel View Publishing, 2011, 880p.
- Annie Gondras, *La valorisation touristique des châteaux et demeures historiques*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, 300p.
- Jean-Michel Hoerner, *Annales de tourisme 2011*, Perpignan, Éditions Talaia, coll. “Géopolitique 2”, 2011, 222p.
- Sandie Holgun, “‘National Spain Invites You’: Battlefield Tourism during the Spanish Civil War”, *The American Historical Review*, 110(5), 2005, pp. 1399–1426.
- Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870-1871*, Pan, 2012.
- Jennifer Iles, “Encounters in the Fields: Tourism to the Battlefields of the Western Front”, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 6(2), 2008, pp. 138–154.
- Bertrand Larique, *L'économie du tourisme en France des années 1890 à la veille de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Organisation et développement d'un secteur socio-économique*, history doctoral thesis, Bordeaux III University, 2006.
- John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, London, Continuum, 2000, 184p.
- David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919–1939*, London, Berg, 1998, 264p.
- Observatoire Lorrain du Tourisme, *Chiffres clés du tourisme en Alsace Champagne-Ardenne Lorraine 2015*, 2016, pp. 12–14 [<http://www.observatoire-lorraine.fr/publications/poids-economique/>].
- Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *Penser la Grande Guerre. Un essai d'historiographie*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2004, 352p.
- Joël Raboteur, *Introduction à l'économie du tourisme*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000, 152p.
- Eric Venbrux, “Cemetery tourism: Coming to terms with death?”, *La Ricerca Folklorica*, 61, Indigenous Tourism, Performance, and Cross-Cultural Understanding in the Pacific, April 2010, pp. 41–49.
- Philippe Violier (ed.), *L'espace local et les acteurs du tourisme*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1999, 177p.
- Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 310p.
- Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1985 (2nd ed., 2003), 376p.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

European Commission, *Economic Crisis in Europe: Causes, Consequences and Responses*, European Economy 7, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009, consulted 20/09/2015 [[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/publication15887\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/publication15887_en.pdf)].

Claire Hagège and Clotilde Masson, “La création d’entreprise en 2009 dopée par les auto-entrepreneurs”, *INSEE Première*, 1277, 2010, consulted 20/09/2015 [[www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref\\_id=ip1277](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=ip1277)].

Arthur Young, *Arthur Young’s Travels in France during the Years 1787, 1788, 1789*, ed. Matilda Betham-Edwards, London, George Bell & Sons, 1909 [<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/young-arthur-youngs-travels-in-france-during-the-years-1787-1788-1789>].

### **Webography and digital support**

<http://www.batailledecastillon.com>

<http://www.cwgc.org/>

<https://companycheck.co.uk/company/01442476/LEGER-HOLIDAYS-LIMITED/summary>

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy-1/tourism/the-place-of-tourism-in-the-french/>

<http://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf/consommation/Pratiques-commerciales/TVA-a-5-5-dans-la-restauration>

[http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions\\_services/etudes-et-statistiques/stats-tourisme/chiffres-cles/CC\\_Tourisme\\_2014-v\\_anglaise2.pdf](http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions_services/etudes-et-statistiques/stats-tourisme/chiffres-cles/CC_Tourisme_2014-v_anglaise2.pdf)

<http://www.historial.org/>

[http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/08/02/apres-un-sejour-polemique-le-roi-d-arabie-saoudite-quitte-la-cote-d-azur\\_4708948\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/08/02/apres-un-sejour-polemique-le-roi-d-arabie-saoudite-quitte-la-cote-d-azur_4708948_3224.html)

[www.memorialdeverdun.fr/](http://www.memorialdeverdun.fr/)

<http://www.observatoire-lorraine.fr/publications/poids-economique/>

<http://www.ojd.com/Support/l-est-republicain>

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/292>

<http://www.oradour.info/>

[http://www.oradour-sur-glane.fr/traitement/contenu.php?id\\_rubrique=55](http://www.oradour-sur-glane.fr/traitement/contenu.php?id_rubrique=55)

<http://www.puydufou.com/en/histoire>

<http://www.thiepval.org.uk/>

<http://www.thomascook.com/thomas-cook-history/>

<http://www.visitbattlefields.co.uk/>

## NOTES

1. Trajectoires des aires et stations touristiques : dynamiques d’innovation, mises en tension et enjeux prospectifs, Bordeaux, France, 16–18 April 2015.
2. [www.batailledecastillon.com](http://www.batailledecastillon.com) (consulted 21/05/2015).
3. <http://www.puydufou.com/en/histoire> (consulted 23/03/2017).
4. [http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions\\_services/etudes-et-statistiques/stats-tourisme/chiffres-cles/CC\\_Tourisme\\_2014-v\\_anglaise2.pdf](http://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions_services/etudes-et-statistiques/stats-tourisme/chiffres-cles/CC_Tourisme_2014-v_anglaise2.pdf) (consulted 21/04/2015).
5. See Annex 2.
6. See Annex 1.
7. <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy-1/tourism/the-place-of-tourism-in-the-french/> (consulted 17/05/2015).
8. <http://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf/consommation/Pratiques-commerciales/TVA-a-5-5-dans-la-restauration> (consulted 25/08/2016).
9. European Museum of the Year Award, Special Commendation, 1994.
10. Interview conducted with local restaurant owner and hotel owner, 10/08/2016.
11. <http://www.historial.org/> (consulted 25/05/2015).
12. *100 Great War 14-18 - Centenary of the Great War Sites, Museums, Events*, multilingual publicity brochure produced by the tourist boards for Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Aisne and West-Vlaanderen, 2016.
13. <http://www.somme-battlefields.com/centenary-somme-2016/new-thiepval-museum-dedicated-battles-somme> (consulted 20/08/2016).
14. <http://www.cwgc.org/about-us/our-organisation/how-we-are-funded.aspx> (consulted 24/08/2016).
15. Press kit published by the Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne, <http://www.historial.org/> (consulted 25/04/2015).
16. [www.memorialdeverdun.fr/](http://www.memorialdeverdun.fr/) (consulted 26/05/2015).
17. Press kit published by the Mémorial de Verdun, [www.memorialdeverdun.fr/](http://www.memorialdeverdun.fr/) (consulted 24/05/2015).
18. <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/departement.asp?dep=55> (consulted 20/08/2016).
19. [http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/departement.asp?dep=80#dep\\_P](http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/recensement/populations-legales/departement.asp?dep=80#dep_P) (consulted 20/08/2016).
20. <http://www.ojd.com/Support/l-est-republicain> (consulted 27/05/2015).
21. France 2, France Télévisions, broadcast 29/05/2016.
22. <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy-1/tourism/the-place-of-tourism-in-the-french/> (consulted 24/05/2015).
23. <http://www.thiepval.org.uk/news.htm> (consulted 24/05/2015). Conversion rate of 0.72/1.39.
24. <http://www.visitbattlefields.co.uk/> (consulted 25/05/2015).
25. <https://companycheck.co.uk/company/01442476/LEGER-HOLIDAYS-LIMITED/summary> (consulted 29/05/2015).
26. Interview conducted with Ms Anita Rodgers, European Touring Commercial Manager, Leger Holidays, 20/08/2015.
27. [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/08/02/apres-un-sejour-polemique-le-roi-d-arabie-saoudite-quitte-la-cote-d-azur\\_4708948\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/08/02/apres-un-sejour-polemique-le-roi-d-arabie-saoudite-quitte-la-cote-d-azur_4708948_3224.html) (consulted 29/08/2016).

---

## ABSTRACTS

The “economy of history” in France, or history as a motor for French economic activity, is of great importance to those areas of the country most affected by the First and Second World Wars. The attraction of France to tourists is a well-known, and quantifiable, phenomenon, yet the impact of battlefield tourists on both the local and national economies has remained hitherto unknown.

Battlefield tourism attracts enthusiasts both from within France’s borders, as well as those journeying from further afield. This study seeks to show the relative importance of this niche market for those French villages that have been the most heavily touched by these historical events, making use of both official statistics as well as those published by the centres themselves, most notably the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne and the Visitor Centre at Thiepval. However, the economic consequences are not simply felt within France, but also cross international borders along with those undertaking the journey, illustrated by the case study of Leger Holidays.

L'économie de l'histoire définit l'histoire comme moteur de l'activité économique. Elle est d'une importance majeure dans les régions de la France les plus impactées par la première et la seconde guerre mondiale. L'attraction des touristes pour les champs de bataille est un phénomène bien connu et quantifiable, mais leur impact économique est peu abordé.

Le tourisme des champs de bataille attire l'enthousiasme des touristes de France aussi bien que de ceux venant d'en dehors de ses frontières. Cette étude cherche à montrer l'importance relative de ce marché de niche, en utilisant les statistiques officielles gouvernementales ainsi que des données privées, comme celles trouvées pour l'Historial de la Grande Guerre à Péronne et le Centre de visite à Thiepval. Or les conséquences économiques se font sentir au-delà de la France ; elles traversent les pays avec ces touristes, comme le montre l'étude de Leger Holidays.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** économie de l'histoire, tourisme des champs de bataille, champs de bataille de la Première Guerre mondiale, Seconde Guerre mondiale, tourisme français

**Keywords:** economy of history, battlefield tourism, World War 1 battlefields, World War II, French tourism

## AUTHOR

DAVID FOULK

Economic history student, master 2, Bordeaux Montaigne University, CEMMC,  
dfoulk001@gmail.com