



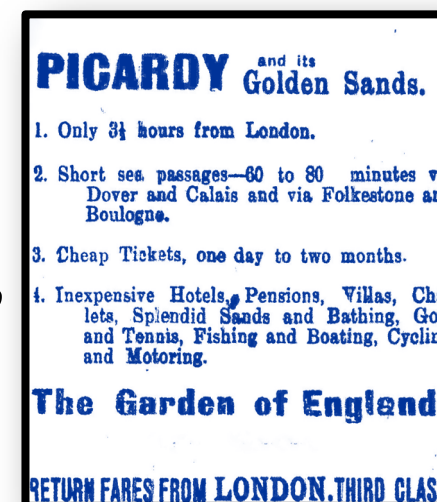
Leytonstone at War 1914/18

It was a small omission but significant. This advertisement in the Leytonstone 'Express & Independent' enticed visitors to Picardy in France and appeared every week from June 1914.

Picardy was beautiful and featured towns such as Amien and Chantilly while to the north, just outside the region, Arras and Cambrai beckoned the discerning visitor. It was also easy to pop over the Belgium border and enjoy the delights of Ypres and Passchendaele

Picardy also boasted a river whose Celtic name meant 'tranquillity'.

This river was called 'The Somme'.



PICARDY



PICARDY

In August the advert did not feature in the newspaper but in spite of this Picardy was to be visited by thousands of Leytonstone people in the coming years. Acting in response to a more direct invitation from the government, these travellers were given free transport, free lodgings (of sorts), free medical care, free clothing and even a small wage. For many it was to be the first time they had visited foreign shores. It was to be the trip of their lifetime. A trip that offered adventure and excitement and perhaps even glory.

Someone cancelled the advert because it was clear that Picardy was to become a major venue for WW1 which started on 4th. August. However no one knew at that time the true extent of the carnage, horror and butchery that would besmirch its fields and pastures in the coming years.

No one knew that six hundred Leytonstone people would never return from their visit and many many more would carry the terrible scars of battle for the rest of their lives.



YPRES



CHANTILLY

However this presentation is not about those Leytonstone people who went away to war - it is about those who fought their war at home. These people may not have fired a weapon but their role was vital and in many ways just as significant.

So what happened to its people, when Leytonstone went to War ?