

# Holts Tours Battlefields & Education

## Battlefield Tours

### Advice for Teachers

#### **Coach Seat Allocation**

Since all coach seats are numbered, it makes a great deal of sense to allocate each pupil with a seat that becomes their responsibility throughout the trip. As in classrooms, this is a good way of separating troublesome pupils. It also helps reduce the rare incidents of vandalism – in our experience, however, pupils respect the fact that they are provided with a modern, comfortable environment.

#### **Teacher/Escort Seating**

It is virtually impossible to maintain discipline from the front seats. When the supervisory group agrees a rota system – which ensures there are always teachers or escorts positioned at the rear of the coach – we find we have an incident-free journey.

#### **Coach Toilets**

Coach toilets are designed for occasional use and can be easily blocked by misuse. We are happy to issue the toilet key to your nominated teacher for issue to any pupil requiring the toilet, which helps cut down on unnecessary visits.

#### **Seatbelts and Safety**

Coaches and buses are six times safer per mile than cars, and injuries are extremely rare with fewer than ten child fatalities per year –most while boarding or alighting from the coach (Transport Statistics 2000: DETR). This average is falling due, in part, to the fitting of seatbelts.

Holts advises teachers to take special care to explain to pupils that seatbelts **MUST** be worn while travelling. Consider introducing some small penalty for those who don't. Teachers should, of course, lead by example.

#### **Coach Regulations in France**

A new regulation was passed in France on 9th July 2003 (Decret 2003-637) and which concerns the wearing of seat belts on coaches.

In a nutshell:

The driver is obliged to wear his/her seat belt at all times. There is a fine of 135 Euros for any driver who does not do this (reduced to 95 Euros if paid on the spot, but increased to 375 Euros if not paid within 30 days). Individual passengers, including children, can also be fined 135 Euros for non-compliance when their seats have belts fitted and they are not wearing them. It seems probable therefore, that in the case of school parties, it would be the teacher who would be fined.

The rules apply to both French coaches and vehicles from other countries. Drivers/party leaders are obliged to ensure that passengers are aware of their obligation to wear belts.

### **Drivers**

Coach drivers cannot concentrate if they are distracted by bad behaviour, or by unnecessary interruptions. It is forbidden by law to talk needlessly to the driver while a journey is in progress. Please ensure pupils are fully aware of this.

### **Videos**

Coach companies have no objection to playing videos during a trip. We recommend that teachers advise pupils to enjoy their music through personal headphones/earphones and avoid clashes of taste. We also recommend that videos are used only in the hours of darkness and are selected before the trip by a pupil vote. Coach companies are licensed to play hired videos aboard coaches.

### **Food**

Cleaners face great problems removing some foods, such as chewing gum and chocolate, from coach seats. If pupils are expected to bring a packed lunch, please ask parents to avoid these two snacks.

### **Drugs**

Teenage pupils should be made aware of drugs issues before travelling and that coaches are almost always checked by customs on return to the UK.

### **Visiting Memorials and Cemeteries**

Many of the areas you will be visiting are sacred sites where many hundreds of soldiers lost their lives. Please impress upon all your students the need for reverence, respect and consideration for others at all Battlefield sites. Students should not sit or climb on memorials and should avoid shouting, running or eating in cemeteries.

### **Clothing**

It is important that your pupils are dressed appropriately, as the Battlefields can often be very cold and muddy. We suggest they bring warm, sensible clothes, waterproofs, wellingtons or walking boots and a towel (please note, towels are not provided at the hostel accommodation).