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A few FAQs to be getting on with

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How much will it cost me to register?

There is no fee for pre-registration. There will be an official registration fee, to be decided soon.

LoosBigWalk2018 will be confirmed at the end of March 2018. Notification will then be given that official registration for the event will be open on a specific date. It will be your choice as to when you register after that point. But it is highly likely that demand will be high for places. So, if as organisers, we have to limit the event to a certain number of participants, your registration might not be accepted if you leave it to the last minute to register. Only those who register in advance can officially participate.

The exact amount of the registration fee will be set on confirmation of the walk going ahead. The fee is *per person* and secures your place on the walk including, if selected, a tour along a section of the tunnels. (Please note: the fee will only reflect the direct costs associated with facilitating the walk. The Durand Group or its members will not profit in any way from the monies raised from event fees.)

When registering, each individual will be asked to consider fundraising for a charity, or charities if more than one.

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What will be included in the fee?

- Participation for one person in the **LoosBigWalk2018** weekend.
- Full event support – pre-walk pack, route signage, route map, event support including main road crossing marshals.
- Supervised information points - *keeps* - at regular intervals.
- Hydration and toilet facilities.
- Tour visit of the tunnels, (if selected to participate.) Terms & Conditions will apply.
- First Aid support and emergency services backup.
- Tunneller's Toddy at Givenchy.
- Finishers pack – Durand Group Mug, badge and certificate.
- Shuttle buses from finish to start.
- Saturday evening events.
- Weekend Service of Commemoration.
- Information on travel, accommodation and eating out.
- Information on what else to do and see in the area.
- Access to special offers that might be available from event partners.

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What will not be included?

- Transport to and from the start line or transport from the finish line to any other destination other than from where you started.
- A guaranteed tunnel visit over the weekend. (see *Will I be guaranteed a tunnel visit?*).
- Sustenance, other than hydration, en route.
- Specialist clothing. (It will be your own responsibility to be suitably attired and it is mandatory to be visible to others at all times)
- Any events not directly organised by us, or that might require an additional fee beyond our control.
- Travel, accommodation or sustenance of any kind during your weekend stay in the area.
- Any kind of personal insurance, whether travel or otherwise, for your time with us, either above or below ground.

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How old will I need to be?



On the date of the event:

- 12 Years+ (All under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.)
- 16 years+ for tunnel walkers

The organisers reserve the right to ask for proof of identity and age before participation.

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Can dogs accompany walkers at the event?



Only official guide dogs may accompany persons participating in the walk.

In general dogs cannot be catered for along the route and can be difficult to manage. Also, although some of the route crosses public land, much of it is private and access has been granted to us by landowners specially for the event. We would not wish to abuse their goodwill.

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Will I be guaranteed a tunnel visit?

No. Although you have a very good chance of it happening for you.

The Durand Group are currently working out a very meticulous plan to safely accommodate all those who might wish to go into the tunnels on the weekend. But this will undoubtedly run into the hundreds and obviously, if a thousand people sign up for the walk, we can't possibly fit everyone in over one weekend.*

When you register officially, you will first be asked whether you even wish to be considered for the tunnel tour. (Of course, some may not want to or be able to) But if you do then your name will be entered into a secret ballot. This will be drawn on, or soon after, the closing date for registration in August 2018 and dependant on how many we think we can accommodate, those selected will get the opportunity to take the tour. Exact numbers will be determined later this year. Entry to the tunnels will be at the sole discretion of the Durand Group and are dependent on you agreeing to our terms and conditions. (to be published later)

* The Durand Group are looking at adding additional *tunnel only* days to the event, immediately before the official weekend, to accommodate any people who want to do the tunnel tour but may not be balloted to do so.

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Will I be able to cancel my registration if I change my mind?

After registration you can cancel your place on **LoosBigWalk2018**. But you will not receive a refund if you cancel after 22nd August 2018 (less than one month before the event). This is the date that your official notification of a place, together with your walk schedule within the event will be sent out to you.

To cancel at any time before this, just email us:

info@loosbigwalk2018.net

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Will I be able to manage the walk above ground?



Only you or those close to you know your physical limitations when it comes to something like this. 26km* over two days might be more arduous for some than it is for others.

You ought to have a basic level of health and fitness that will enable you to complete the walk without too much effort. You will of course need to prepare but the more comfortable you are with walking long distances for sustained periods the more comfortable you will be on the walk. Stout footwear and clothing, suitable for all weather scenarios, will also help in your ability to complete the walk.

Shortly after beginning the walk at Grenay you will have the opportunity to take one of two routes. (see map on the website) The **blue** route will stay on relatively flat ground and follow a path dissecting the attack of 15th Scottish and 47th London divisions towards Loos on September 25th 1915. The **red** route will detour up to the top of one of the massive post-war spoil heaps overlooking the Loos Salient from which a stunning panorama of the 1915 battlefield can be had. Both routes will then converge for the remainder of the days' walk.

* Exact route and distance may vary slightly.

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Will I need any special abilities or skills to go through the tunnels?



If you are one of those selected to make some of the route underground, through the tunnels, in addition to the basic fitness levels needed for the walk over ground, you will need to be able to confidently ascend and descend a ladder, to a depth of approximately 20 feet, without undue effort. You will need to be relaxed about being in a confined space or cave-like environment and you will need to be generally unafraid of the dark!

Some elements of the tunnel may require the use of steps and occasionally necessitate a short stoop (but definitely no crawling).

Apart from these considerations you need only have stout footwear and suitable clothing in order to enjoy this experience. The Durand Group will provide hard hats, gloves, dust masks if required and all illumination for you in the tunnels. We will also act as your enablers for safe access into and out of the tunnel system.

The group will be your chaperones and guides within the tunnels for the complete duration, which will take approximately one hour from entrance to exit. Upon exiting you can relax a while before continuing your walk, above ground, towards Givenchy.

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Can my walk schedule be flexible?

LoosBigWalk2018 will be held over two days. Some of you will be starting the walk on Saturday at Grenay and finishing at Hulluch for that day – about 13km. Others will be scheduled to start at Hulluch and finish at Givenchy – also about 13km. You will then swap over on the Sunday. You will be allocated your start location nearer the time of the event.

Splitting the walk over two days and staggering the start times and start location enables us to escort more people through the tunnels. Otherwise we would have to cram everyone through at the same time, on only one day, and this would be impractical.

Ultimately, apart from a window of time that will be given to you in advance for a tunnel visit, your schedule is as flexible as you wish it to be. It is up to you whether you complete the walk or not. Your financial charity pledge will drive how many or how few kilometres you complete.

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What do I need to take with me?

For the walk both over ground and in the tunnels, stout footwear and clothing suitable for the weather on the day is recommended. Plan for any eventuality with the weather. For those selected to visit the tunnels, attire such as hard hats, gloves and illumination will all be provided by the Durand Group.

A light rucksack containing spare items, hydration and other sustenance is a must. You may wish to stop for a picnic lunch along the way. But if you don't bring your lunch with you, you might go hungry!

Of course, we hope to have some provisions available for you at the various *keeps* - information points along the route. But bring your own provisions anyway.

You may wish to take photographs or video. Please be reminded that photographs taken in the tunnels may not be used for anything other than personal private use. Use on social media sites is acceptable providing they are not made available to the general public. When you register officially for the walk, this will become part of the contract between you and the organisers.

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How do I keep to the route? Is there a map?

You will receive a route map at your event start point, whether Grenay or Hulluch, marked with *keeps* - information points, points of interest, potential hazards, distances and alternative directions, should you wish to pause your journey for any reason. The route will also be clearly and fully signed in GREEN with Durand Group markings. For those of you starting from Grenay who wish to see a spectacular panorama of the Loos battlefield from atop one of the famous 'Terrils de Loos' a RED route will be clearly signed. This will then join the main GREEN route further on. A BLUE alternative route is available for those who prefer to stay on level ground.

Maps will also be available before the event from the website, along with lots of other useful information to help you get the most from your journey.

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What exactly is a *Keep*?

The term *Keep* comes from its use in the middle ages as a fortified area that also acted as a place of sanctuary, usually within the ramparts of a castle, to which the occupants could rally if they were overwhelmed. Citadels and redoubts are similar in concept.

Before the Battle of Loos in 1915, there were many *keeps* established behind the British front lines. The Germans had similar arrangements including the infamous *Hohenzollern Redoubt*.

Our tented *Keeps* will certainly be places of sanctuary for the weary walker. But they will also provide a wealth of historical information on the Loos Salient and an opportunity to chat with friends, colleagues and like-minded individuals, many of whom will be extremely knowledgeable about the battle area they are overseeing and the units that fought close by.

In addition to role of the individual infantry and artillery units that served in any given locale, the Durand Group will be providing engineering and tunnelling information so that an understanding of the battle both above and below ground can be had.

Hydration, toilet facilities and access to emergency services will also be available via the keeps.

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Will I be safe on the walk or in the tunnel? Will I be insured?



ABOVE GROUND: There will be plenty of supervision along the walk, both at the information *keeps* and at any designated road crossing points. These will be indicated on the route map given to you on the day of the event and made available beforehand on the website. But walkers should bear in mind that the Loos Salient battleground, although much of it rural, is criss-crossed with busy roads servicing a multitude of retail parks and other facilities. Care should always be taken in crossing roads or tracks. This is a working environment!

UNDERGROUND: Everyone is familiar with the term 'safe as houses'. Under Durand Group expert supervision, provided you follow our rules and guidelines, you will always be 'safe as tunnels'.

We have spent many months preparing the tunnels for the visit you will be making. That includes the entrance and exit to them. We have removed, where practical, artefacts that might be hazardous, but kept those that we think might be of interest to you. We have 'cleaned' the floors to minimise the risk of stumbling. And we have checked the walls and ceilings for any sign of wear and tear, removing sharp corners and any undesirable under hangs. The tunnels will be well ventilated during your visit.

From an insurance point of view we ourselves are insured to take you, as a third party, into the tunnels and we have appropriate cover for this. However, we expect you to have your own travel insurance to cover you. This will be a mandatory requirement by us for a visit by you to the tunnels.

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What if someone has an accident or becomes unwell?



ABOVE GROUND: If, unfortunately, you have to drop out of the walk, in the event of feeling unwell, overly tired or having hurt yourself, if possible try and reach the nearest *keep* or information point where the supervisors will immediately contact the organisers for assistance. First responders will be alerted if necessary and full medical backup will be on hand as soon as possible should a diagnosis be more serious. In the event that you cannot reach the informational point, someone walking with you should go ahead or back, whichever is closer, to alert those in the nearest informational point along the route. Emergency services' telephone details will be supplied nearer the time of the event.

BELOW GROUND: In the event that you become unwell or hurt yourself in the tunnels, the same standard of First Aid and emergency services backup will also be quickly available to you – dedicated to this element of the walk. The most common complaint for the inexperienced tunneller is *claustrophobia*. But this can be quickly mitigated by speedy extraction and a nice cup of tea!

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How do I get to the start and from the finish?

You will be expected to get to your allocated start points (Grenay or Hulluch) under your own steam. This will most certainly be by car or coach. You will use the same means to return to where you came from. However a regular shuttle bus service will be on hand at the finish (Hulluch or Givenchy) to take you back to your start point. This may take a little time at busy periods, especially where clumps of walkers may arrive at the finish together, so if you want to organise your own return, that's fine too.

Limited parking will be available at the start and finish points although details of these designated areas will only be published nearer the event date.

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How will I know about other related events?



There is much to see and do in the area apart from walking. If your stay is longer than the weekend or you complete the walk early you may get an opportunity to visit some of the local museums or sites.

A full itinerary of events supporting **LoosBigWalk2018** will be published nearer the time. If any should involve additional costs these will be indicated to you.

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What does the Service of Remembrance involve?



Details of this, including exactly when and where, will be published nearer the time of official registration. Durand Group member – Rev Nigel Cave – will be conducting the service and we hope to involve a number of local communities in its organisation.

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This is a weekend event. Where will I be staying?



Links to hotels, gîtes, youth hostels and other private accommodation will be made available to you on the website in due course.

Similar details of restaurants, brasseries, cafes and bars will also be made available.

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How will I start fundraising?



Once you have officially registered with The Durand Group for **LoosBigWalk2018**, in the Spring of 2018, you are free to organise your own fund-raising initiative. As a group, we certainly don't want to manage any donations ourselves or tell you where any money you raise should go. So any charity that you personally endorse and support may be a beneficiary. The choice is yours.

All that we will ask is that you inform us of the final amount you raise and who the beneficiary will be, so that we may record it as part of any fundraising total.

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How do I let you know how much I have raised?



Your own money-giving account, whosoever it might be with, will have done all the work for you. Simply email us with the details and we will add you to our overall tally. This will be published on the website as soon as possible after **LoosBigWalk2018** is over.

contact@loosbigwalk2018.net