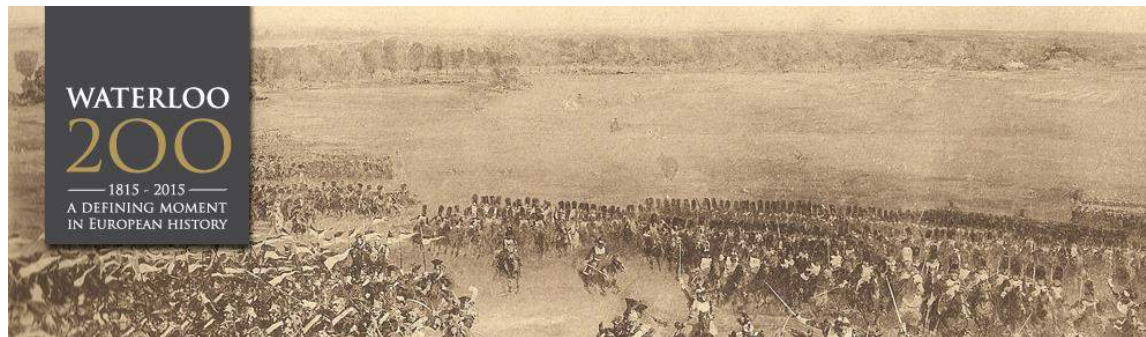


International Professional Development and Training Course

Teaching 1815. Rethinking the Battle of Waterloo from Multiple Perspectives

EVENT REPORT



12-15 February 2015

*Château du Cheneau
Braine-l'Alleud, Belgium*



Executive Summary

The International Seminar gathered around 40 history educators from all over Europe to learn, exchange and reflect on the theme "Teaching 1815. Rethinking the Battle of Waterloo from Multiple Perspectives".

A varied and dense programme offered participants opportunities to deepen their understanding of the history of the battle, with a special focus on its impact at European and global levels, on the way it is remembered and on the relevance of this topic to teach about war and peace nowadays. The hospitality of the local

partners contributed to make this Seminar an enjoyable and enriching international gathering of history enthusiasts.

The event was hosted by the [Municipality of Braine-l'Alleud](#), where the Waterloo battlefield is located. It was co-organised with the [Waterloo Committee](#) with the support of [Waterloo 200](#), the Brabant-Wallon Province, the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and the Goldman Sachs Give. Participants were offered a balance between theoretical insights and hands-on activities during the Seminar.



Setting the scene

In 1815, part of the fighting that took place at the Battle of Waterloo actually occurred on the territory of Braine-l'Alleud. Chantal Versmissen-Sollie, 1st Counselor responsible for education in Braine-l'Alleud, represented the municipal authorities at the Seminar. James Elles congratulated all partner organisations for putting together such a rich event.

The Seminar was part of the EUROCLIO International Training Programme that provides opportunities for cross-border professional development to history, heritage and citizenship

educators all over Europe. Blandine Smilansky, member of the Secretariat of EUROCLIO, gave a brief presentation of the mission and work of EUROCLIO. Participants were to learn about the history and historiography of the event and the period and the way they are currently taught across Europe. Valuable on-site learning at the Waterloo battlefield and related remembrance places complemented this programme, oriented towards the collaborative development of teaching and learning resources on the topic as the main outcome of the Seminar.

Aims of the Seminar

- To produce an increased awareness, knowledge and know-how about teaching the history of the Battle of Waterloo and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with a pan-European perspective.
- To achieve this objective, the programme offered a combination of theoretical and practical insights, mobilising inputs from historians, local experts of the event, and school practitioners.

Understanding the historical significance of the Battle of Waterloo

The Baron Bernard Snoy, President of the Comité pour les Etudes Historiques de la Bataille de Waterloo, provided the audience with a captivating introduction to the theme of the Seminar that gave a comprehensive and consistent understanding of the multiple ways the Battle of Waterloo has been interpreted. From the British Perspective first, the Battle is a pillar of the

national sentiment; this historical victory is not only against France but against tyranny. From the German Perspective, it is a victory over France, which has humiliated Germany. From the French Perspective, Waterloo is a traumatic event but also a sanction of excessive ambition and despotism. He also presented the Russian and the Dutch perspective. Bernard Snoy presented some questions that are still addressed in today's historiography of the Battle of Waterloo, such as "Who won Waterloo and who was responsible for the French defeat?" or "Could Napoleon have won?".

"It was a battle at the very heart of Europe, a battle for hegemony in Europe, a battle some would therefore say for the soul of Europe, a turning point in European history, heralding the advent contemporary Europe, involving the greatest generals of that time: Napoléon, Wellington, Blücher, and finally one of the battles in world history that has generated the largest number of studies, books, comparisons."

The video recorded key-note speech by Dr. Mike Rapport, reader in modern European history at the University of Glasgow helped Seminar participants to place the historical significance of the Battle of Waterloo in a wider context, through addressing the European and global legacies of the Wars of 1792-1815. First, these wars have been traumatic for Europeans as they were utterly destructive: 5 million victims among the population of Europe. Secondly, the French and Napoleonic Wars led to a major redrawing of the map of Europe in 1815, which concerned notably Germany, the Austrian empire, Poland, Scandinavia, Italy. In this sense the

Napoleonic Wars set the scene for 19th century diplomacy and conflict. French revolutionary practices such as the Napoleonic Code and the Concordat were adopted in several countries which Napoleon invaded and occupied, which quite positive impact. The French and Napoleonic Wars were the first wars of the people, not just of the States. Indeed they mobilised people in unprecedented ways through conscription, new types of taxation, but also quite significantly through propaganda.

One of the consequences of this widespread mobilisation of the people was the important role for women in raising fund, drumming up patriotism, securing supplies, etc. in particular in

Britain and Prussia. In the second part of his speech Dr Mike Rapport looks at the global legacy. He starts with the closest, the Ottoman empire, whose unraveling was accelerated by the clash of arms, as exemplified by the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, and later the Serbian war of independence (1804) and even later the Greek war of independence (1820). Finally, the Wars accelerated the emancipation of the Americans, with the Haitian revolution as a consequence of the French Revolution, the unleashing of Latin American wars of independence, the consolidation of US national identity after the 1812 war with Britain, and the cristalisation of Canadian identity resisting American invasion in 1812.

Full speech of Michael Rapport can be downloaded on
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8lb41V6vMR1WkjlcmVoX3gxSG8/view?usp=sharing>

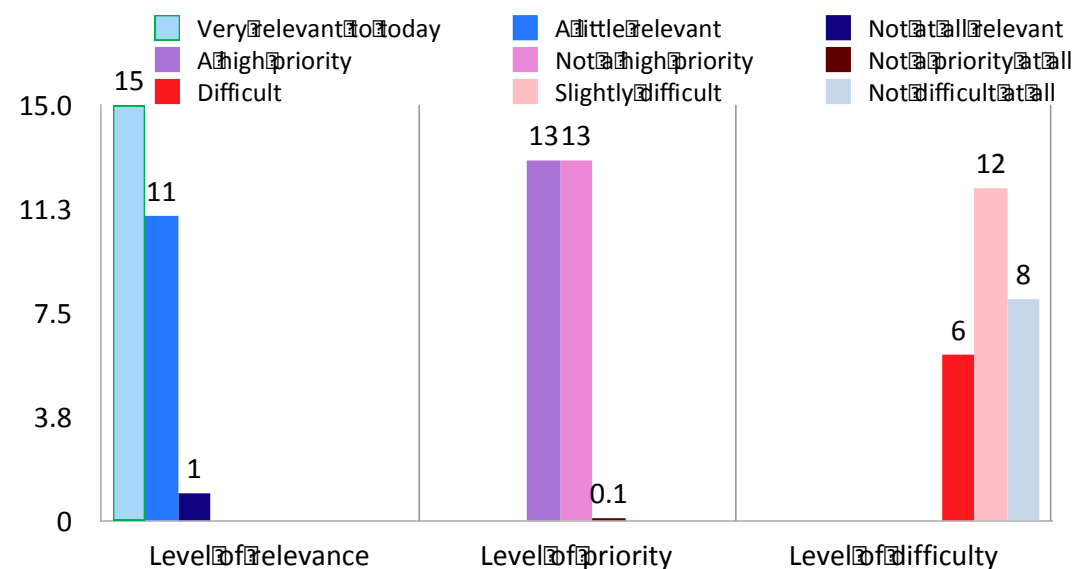
(How) is the Battle of Waterloo taught nowadays in Europe?

The first part of the Seminar concluded with a presentation by Blandine Smilansky on the results of a survey that participants had filled in before the event. 27 answers were received from educators teaching at lower secondary level, upper secondary level, primary level and at university level in 17 different countries. Respondents were asked to answer the same questions about the following topics: the Battle of Waterloo, the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802), the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), Napoléon Bonaparte and the Congress of Vienna.

These topics appear to be part of the curriculum and mentioned in textbooks for a large majority (24). Nevertheless, the battle of Waterloo features marginally. These topics are taught exclusively at secondary school level and most of the participants already taught them.

This chart shows the participants' opinions on the relevance, importance and difficulty of teaching these subjects.

Participants were also asked what they would mostly like to learn about on the topic during the Seminar.



Finally, some questions were raised in the participants answers that inspired the reflection and debate during the Seminar, such as:

- **How can this period be made more accessible to students today?**
- **Are there any new pedagogical approaches about teaching military history?**
- **How to encourage pacifism and develop empathy during lessons about battles, but without traumatising students?**

“Injured Parties: Napoleon and Wellington” by Russ Foster and Paul Brunyee

In this workshop the focus was on the reputation of its two main protagonists, in particular to consider why they might both see themselves as having been ‘injured parties’ in the eyes of posterity. Russ Foster explained amongst others how Wellington (and the 1789-1815 period in general) has been relatively ignored in the British education system over the past generation – and how this might possibly be changed with the recent history curriculum reform.

Drawing on his original research, Paul Brunyee considered Napoleon’s final 5 ½ years in captivity on the Island of St Helena. During these years Napoléon built his own legacy. Through letters and memories, he tried to present himself as a victim of French politics. This way the legacy of Napoleon took form in the 19th century, but it changed later on in the 20th and 21st century.



“Using technology to teach about key events and historical developments” by Derya Yazici



During this interactive workshop Derya showed four free online innovative tools she uses for history education in her classroom, how she uses them, and how she assesses the results of her students. The first is the website “Weebly” that you can use to make your own online newspaper. This is also an example of an interdisciplinary project, as it entails a 1hour lesson in the computerlab with the IT teacher. At the same time students should include literature, war/military and statistics. The tool “Rubric” she made for her students to assess their historical thinking skills and their use of sources (both offline and online). With Postermuywall.com, she demonstrated different presentation techniques such as prezis and emaze (app.emaze.com).

Some gain through pain - Advances in Military Medicine 1750-1815 by Michael Crumplin

In this session Michael Crumplin (medical military historian, author, trustee and treasurer of the Waterloo Committee) shared his knowledge on the medical aspects of the Napoleonic Wars. He explained that it is hard to underestimate the importance of medical aspects because disease was killing 5 times as many soldiers than battle wounds. There was no anaesthesia and bleeding the patient was a commonly practiced method.



This drawing of an examination of a young surgeon in Great Britain illustrates the point that the start of the Napoleonic wars few surgeons had experience in the battlefield.

By the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the armies – who had been fighting campaigns since 1793, had medical staffs that were experienced to work on the battlefield. Using historical artefacts, explicit visual sources and revealing statistics, Michael Crumplin

triggered the imagination of the participants on what it was like to be wounded or to be treated during the one of the campaigns.



In the French Army Jean Dominique Larrey (1766-1842) introduced the Ambulance Volante division to better treat injured soldiers on the spot.

In the final part of the session, Michel Crumplin listed the gains that were made in medical treatment during war time in the period 1750-1815. These included: improved status, remuneration and respect for the Military surgeon; control of smallpox, scurvy and some progress with isolation for contagion and sepsis; provision of adequate diet - most of the time; some 'militarisation' of medicine - local care for the sick and wounded; and considerable surgical innovation (such as the use of a tourniquet to stop bleeding).

Michael Crumplin argued that these innovations and the lessons learned in the medical field, led to much better survival rates in modern wars (such as the 93,3 % survival rate of British troops in Afghanistan in the period 2002-2014).

Memory in the making: visiting the sites of the Battle ahead of the 200-year commemorations

The afternoon of the 13 February was devoted to a visit to a series of sites where the Battle of Waterloo was fought. Starting at the visitors' centre of the Waterloo battlefield with a documentary film, participants were



then invited to climb the **Lion's Mound**, a huge cone of earth that marks the spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded during the Battle. The Lion's Mound offers an exceptional panoramic

view of the battlefield, now a beautiful nature site.

On the battlefield the Seminar participants were also taken to the building sheltering an impressive **Panorama**, a huge fresco - 110 metres round and 12 metres high - painted by Louis Dumoulin in 1912 to mark the first centenary of the battle.



Participants visited the site of the **Ferme d'Hougoumont**, an advanced allies position that Napoleon attacked on

18 June and became the most violent



point of fighting. The farm buildings are currently under renovation in preparation for the bicentenary, and the group had a chance to meet and exchange with the architect supervising the work. This renovation project is the initiative of a UK charity called "Project Hougoumont"

(www.projecthougoumont.com/),

whose aim is to return the farmstead to its appearance after the battle.

The next stop for this half-day visit was the **Wellington Museum**, located at the heart of the town of Waterloo in the inn is where the Duke of Wellington set up his headquarters in June 1815.



space where it all took place and therefore a certain impression of how it was.

At the end of the day, the Mayor of Braine l'Alleud, M. Vincent Scourneau and the members of the municipal Council welcomed the participants.

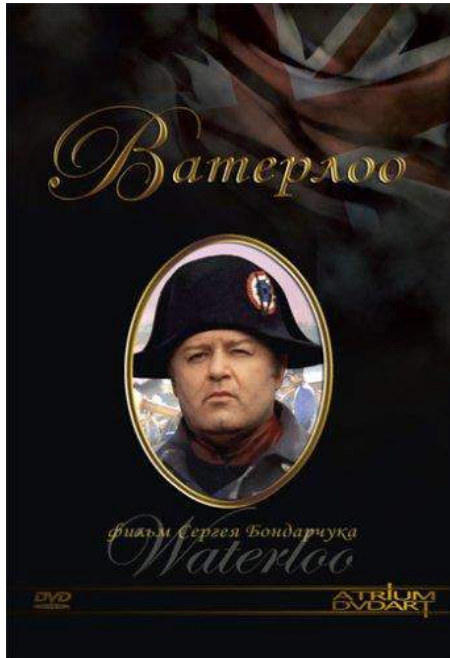


Later the group was welcomed at the **saint Etienne church** of Braine-l'Alleud by the priest. This church served as a hospital in the days following the

Battle. Thanks to these visits people got really a sense of the



The Battle of Waterloo in local politics and popular memory: an emotional subject



Thanks to the support by the Centre Culturel of Braine-l'Alleud, the seminar participants were invited to watch extracts from several films dedicated to the battle of Waterloo which was stimulated with discussions afterwards.

This activity aimed to present the participants different views on the battle reflected through these films and provoke discussion over the ways the movie scenes have been described, as well as encourage reflections on the image of historical figures such as Napoleon, Wellington as well as the soldiers in the battlefield and the way these figures are depicted.

The participants have seen extracts from the movies such as Waterloo, Karl Grune, 1928, Napoléon, Sacha Guitry, 1955, Waterloo, Bondarchuk, 1970, Waterloo, l'Ultime Bataille, Hugues Lanneau, 2014. Participants found this activity innovative and an added value to envisaging multiple perspectives through movies and sharing views with peer colleagues in the cinema setting.



An Exercise in Multiperspectivity: projection of film extracts on the Battle of Waterloo and follow-up discussion, *Centre Culturel of Braine-l'Alleud*

Historiana Day

Historiography of the Battle of Waterloo with the contribution of Pr. Bruno Colson (University of Namur-Belgium) and Dr. Russ E. Foster (Waterloo 200 -UK). Moderated by Bernard Snoy.

Pr. Colson presented an overview of publications concerning the Battle, different perspectives from the French, English and German point of view. He enlightened the nationalist issue of remembering the Battle of Waterloo. He also mentioned that Waterloo represent the last romantic battle before the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of moderns arms.

Dr. Russ E. Foster analyzed the challenge to create a European common narrative on lessons, legacy and remembrance of the Battle. After that, participants ask question to go in depth on how to teach Waterloo using aspects of the Battle untreated in History textbooks like civilian's impact, social and health context etc. and not only the military aspect.



Creating a teaching module on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and the Battle of Waterloo – the case of Historiana, by Francesco Scatigna, EUROCLIO

Francesco Scatigna started his presentation introducing the participants of the Waterloo 200 training to the history of Historiana. He showed some examples of the Historiana work.

The education specialists had to think about how they would teach different topics concerning the XIX century in an interactive way according to the Historiana principles. They had to choose between the following topics: Europe at the end on 18th century; Napoleon Coup; the congress of Vienna; what is the legacy?

Thus, the education specialists worked in groups and expressed their ideas in the papers.

Finally, one member of each team presented the work. In this way, the participants could share their experiences and innovative ideas about how to teach some traditional Europe history topics.

How to develop transnational source collections? by Judith Geerling and Steven Stegers, Martijn de Jong EUROCLIO

EUROCLIO team presented a source collection with caricatures of Napoleon from UK, France, Germany, Russia and Spain. In this way, the participants could see some different perspectives of Napoleon through the lens of cartoonists at their time.

After that, Judith presented the features of a good source collection. As she explained, it has to be transnational, multiperspective, balanced and it has to tell a story. Consequently, EUROCLIO team asked the participants to make a source collection of Napoleon topic respecting those features.

The education specialist actively worked again in groups. They dealt with the challenge creating a power point and taking into account the following issues: the purpose of the source, where it fits and which type of source it is. Finally, they presented their work to the rest of the participants.



How to use digital tools to promote historical thinking? by Helen Snelson, EUROCLIO

The last part of the Historiana day in Waterloo international training was organized by Helen Snelson. She referred to the importance of using digital tools in a pedagogical way. Moreover, she presented an example which showed how history teachers can teach using those tools and applying to historical thinking: e.g. presenting change and continuity in history, cause and consequence.

Once again, in order to make an interactive presentation, Helen presented a challenge for the participants: presenting a learning history task for students using digital tools and applying to historical knowledge.

CONCLUSION:

What did we see? What did we learn?

As Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, the EUROCLIO special advisor, commented at the training closure, during the event we heard many interesting facts and interpretations about the battle, the leading figures, with a special focus on Wellington, the medical conditions and treatment and the historiography around the battle. Besides, we could observe some of the challenges concerning the knowledge about the Battle of Waterloo: among others, the fact that the focus of much research about the battle of Waterloo is still traditional; moreover there's a very little attempts to go to cross border point of views.



"When I taught about it I never had in mind a chain of important events which were caused by these wars such as liberation of Latin America, creation of Serbian state and its liberation from Ottoman Empire, successful revolt of slaves in Haiti and etc."

What does this all mean for our educational practice? A new way to teach military history: link with peace education

By looking at this battle from the perspective of remembrance, we can point out the national bias and the romantic representation of the event.

Moreover, it is possible to teach military history in a new way through use of letters of soldiers, officer's diaries, memoirs of witnesses. Teaching the story of this battle through the lenses of ordinary people and through destiny of soldiers we can show that war is very destructive with long-lasting negative effects on society, we can encourage pacifism and also create empathy with the victims and their families.

"I was surprised with the level of emotions which followed certain discussions about the battle of Waterloo".

"I didn't expect that so many new facts, interpretations and theories about this battle are available."

**Walking Dinner offered by the Waterloo
Belgium Committee at Château de Seigneur-
Bois-Isaac¹
Property of the Baron Bernard Snoy.**

After welcomed participants in his domain, the Baron Bernard Snoy invited participants to listen the communication of Herman Van Rompuy first President of the European Council, as a conclusion of the Seminar. He also thanked organizers for the opportunity to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo and the Napoleonic wars.



Then the Baron invited participants to the dinner. It was a great occasion for participants to discuss and share in a convivial atmosphere. Then participants were invited to visit the library of the chateau and discover archives from the legacy of the Snoy family.



Thanks to the support the Brabant-Wallon Province EUROCLIO will soon issue a bilingual (French and English) publication that will offer critical reflections as well as teaching and learning ideas and tools on the Battle of Waterloo set in its historical context. These proceedings will be aimed at encouraging history educators to address the topic of the Battle of Waterloo and the Napoleonic Wars with their classrooms, in particular around the commemorations of the 18 June 2015, in a transnational and innovative spirit. The publication will address many of the very valuable questions that have been raised during the Seminar: what is the legacy of the Battle of Waterloo? What are the national biases that underpin historical research on the Battle of Waterloo? What are the neglected aspects of the history of this event that are more likely to interest students nowadays? How did the way it is remembered evolved through the past 200 years? What myths still surround the understanding of how significant this battle was?