

Our Heritage Matters

Cogenhoe and Whiston Heritage Society

When you cease to enquire, stupidity has you in its grasp.

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In Flanders' Fields



In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead, short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow.
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from failing hands we throw
The Torch: be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.

This is a war poem in the form of a rondeau, written during the First World War by Canadian physician Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of friend and fellow soldier Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres.

According to legend, fellow soldiers retrieved the poem after McCrae, initially dissatisfied with his work, discarded it.

"In Flanders' Fields" was first published on December 8 of that year in the London-based magazine *Punch*.

It is one of the most popular and most quoted poems from the war. As a result of its immediate popularity, parts of the poem were used in propaganda efforts and appeals to recruit soldiers and raise money selling war bonds. Its references to the red poppies that grew over the graves of fallen soldiers resulted in the remembrance poppy becoming one of the world's most recognised memorial symbols for soldiers who have died in conflict.

The poem and poppy are prominent Remembrance Day symbols throughout the Commonwealth of Nations, particularly in Canada, where "In Flanders' Fields" is one of the nation's best-known literary works.

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If anyone has anything they think would be of interest to our members either that they can create or would be interested in, then do let the chairman know as below. We would also really like a few extra helpers – you don't have to be on the Committee – to especially help with research to help produce this newsletter! Contact Jon Bailey (the Society Chairman) at chairman@cogenhoeheritage.org.uk or enquiries@cogenhoeheritage.org.uk

Jon Bailey

Editor: Jon Bailey
Chief Researcher: Robert Vaughan

Society Meetings

Open to all: non-members just £5 including refreshments and members £3. The full programme can be found on our website www.cogenhoeheritage.org.uk .

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