



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.

By John McCrae, May 1915

The Story of the Royal British Legion Poppy

During the First World War (1914–1918) much of the fighting took place in Western Europe. Previously beautiful countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over, again and again. The landscape swiftly turned to fields of mud: bleak and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow.

Bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) however, were delicate but resilient flowers and grew in their thousands, flourishing even in the middle

of chaos and destruction. In early May 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, Lt Col John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies to write a now famous poem called '**In Flanders Fields**'.

McCrae's poem inspired an American academic, Moina Michael, to make and sell red silk poppies which were brought to England by a French woman, Anna Guérin. The (Royal) British Legion, formed in 1921, ordered 9 million of these poppies and sold them on 11 November that year. The poppies sold out almost immediately and that first ever 'Poppy Appeal' raised over £106,000; a considerable amount of money at the time. This was used to help WW1 veterans with employment and housing.

The following year, Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory to employ disabled ex-Servicemen. Today, the factory and the Legion's warehouse in Aylesford produces millions of poppies each year.

The demand for poppies in England was so high that few were reaching Scotland. Earl Haig's wife established the 'Lady Haig Poppy Factory' in Edinburgh in 1926 to produce poppies exclusively for Scotland. Over 5 million Scottish poppies (which have four petals and no leaf unlike poppies in the rest of the UK) are still made by hand by disabled ex-Servicemen at Lady Haig's Poppy Factory each year and distributed by their sister charity Poppyscotland.

St Mary's Church Warwick, Poppy Installation

St Mary's Church Warwick is organising a temporary installation of a display of knitted or handmade craft poppies throughout October and November 2018 to commemorate the end of the First World War in 1918. They will be donated by members of the congregation **and beyond**. With sufficient quantity, they will be displayed flowing out from the Regimental Chapel and out into and around Church. Members of the public visiting the display will be invited to donate to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and Church funds.

If you would like to knit a poppy, this is one of their patterns, or see <http://www.warwickpoppies.org.uk/>. Members of Hartshill Mothers' Union will be knitting poppies for this project and so, if you create any which you wish to donate, please give them to me or any other member a Hartshill MU and we will get them to Warwick.

Knitted Poppy Pattern



For the best finish, knit with a Double Knit (DK yarn). The size of needle you choose will determine how big the poppy will be, but we recommend 3.5mm or 3.75mm (UK9).

Colour A 1 ball red yarn (this will make a lot of poppies) Colour B Scrap of black yarn or black button

Body of Poppy

Using Col A Cast on 60 stitches

Rows 1 – 10 : K2, P2 across whole row (for a slightly smaller poppy do 8 rows of rib).

Row 11 : Knit 2 stitches together across the row (30 stitches).

Row 12 : Slip 1 stitch, Knit 2 stitches together then pass the slip stitch over... repeat across the whole row (10 stitches).

Break off yarn with long tail and thread back through remaining stitches and pull tight. Join edges with mattress stitch.

Black Centre

Using B, cast on 16 sts. Cast off. Coil into a tight spiral and sew base to the centre. Or use a black or green button with 4 holes and sew to centre of poppy.

Sue Foster