

Papaver rhoeas is known by many as the common poppy or by others corn rose or since the first world war as 'Flanders poppy'

Pre First World War it was referred to as a 'corn' or a 'field' Poppy

It is a flower of the Ranunculaceae order of plants.



One of the first gardening books I obtained in 1968 was a 'deluxe illustrated Edition of Sanders Encyclopaedia of Gardening that was first issued in 1895 – of which my edition is a 1947 reprint.

In this book it says the Poppy is an 'annual' or 'perennial' flower grown, for best results, in sandy loamy soil, but they will set seed in almost any medium.

The seminal publication by Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus in 1753 entitled 'Species Plantarum' and states Papaver as being the Latin word for food or milk and 'rhoeas' means red in Greek

Zoroastrians or those who speak the old Farsi language of Persia hold the Poppy as to be a sign of eternal love particularly love of a melancholic nature. In Urdu red poppies or "Gul-e-Lalah" represent Martyrdom.

There is much made of the word Martyrdom in modern parlance - reserved, mainly it would seem, for those who give their lives for a holy war.

The opposite could be said of those who through the terrible conflict of world war one paid the ultimate sacrifice giving their lives for world peace. The disturbance of the earth during the various battles of WW1 still did not prevent the Poppies from growing.

On the western front Poppies bloomed not just between the trenches but also what was known as 'no man's land' and became a prominent feature "In Flanders Fields"

In the second part of John Bunyan's 'The Pilgrims Progress' 'the authors way' in answer to an 'objection' there are two lines that speak of war – it is thus "in France and Flanders where men kill each other – my pilgrim is esteemed a friend, a brother"

Bunyan wrote these words some 268 years before WW1 so he must have been referring to Agincourt and Henry V which was 240 years before – but there has been at least 8 wars in that region over the centuries so he could have been referring to any one of them.



image of The Battle of the Golden Spurs 1302
Some of you may know the Times has been publishing some of its reports from that time a most recent one mentions the planting of various flowers among the graves and a poignant line is this – “one [a cemetery] in the valley of the Somme battlefield is flanked by rows of tall Italian Poplars and when the graves were covered with Poppies the scene was most impressive”

Moina Belle Michael (August 15, 1869 – May 10, 1944) was the first person to relate the Poppy as being a symbol of remembrance she also wrote a poem ‘we shall keep the faith’ which in many ways was a tribute to John McCrae’s poem ‘In Flanders Fields’ “the poppies blow - between the crosses row on row”

She became known as the Poppy Lady and the US Post issued a 3cent stamp in her honour and there is a stretch of road on Highway 78 named after her – there were many other citations.



Her autobiography of 1941 is called "The Miracle Flower: or the Story of the Flanders Fields Memorial Poppy". Interestingly her Huguenot routes can be traced to Flanders

The first time Poppies were worn as a tribute was at the 1921 ceremony

Here in Feltham in 1919 a mock memorial was erected on the village green opposite The Red Lion. This image shows Rev Browell and the father of Feltham Council John Waldegrave Daines leading the service - this was in mid-summer as the attire and trees in full leaf attest.



The War Memorial we have today was funded by public subscription and cost £370. It is of Portland stone on a concrete base and carries 123 names of local dead from WW1.



It was unveiled 2nd October 1920 by this man Sir Roger Keyes RN, GCB, KCVO, CMG, DSO and many more - A highly decorated man. ‘the question could be asked why did someone of such lofty position come here’



The Reverend Gentle-Cackett gave the dedication address which infers that that it was not just an Anglican inspired prosecution. It has 66 names commemorated thereon.



The War Memorial of today originally stood in front of the Bethany Tabernacle and was erected, again, by public subscription.

But it is not known when obelisk like memorial was erected.

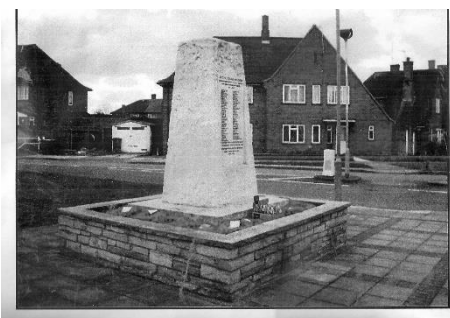
However it was moved from the Tabernacle site sometime in 1948/49 upon the building of South Bedfont Housing Estate in Grove Stile Way

It has a mystery in as much that Eros like figure that once stood upon the memorial was not moved with it. There was also what appears to be a metal pendant at the top of the original inscriptions that also disappeared.

The names are from both World Wars and we are told that at least 3 names have been added since the original 1922 inscriptions, the most recent being Harold William Henry Stepney who died in 1946 (brother our very own Bill Stepney) and one W Tiley together with W Winterbourn although it is not known where and when the last two mentioned served

Also added of recent times is the line *"Remember also those that gave their lives in the Second World War 1939-1945"*.

Hanworth's War Memorial



The villagers of Hanworth formed a War Memorial Committee in early March 1919 and in November 1920 (MChron 20.11.1920 p3), to the left, the memorial was 'erected it commemorates 55 local dead of WW1



The cross, in grey Cornish granite, was designed by Mr. AP Green of Feltham and cost between £330, and £400 including the railings. The firm who carried out the erection was Undertakers and Memorial Masons G S Keates of Hampton Hill who are now part of Lodge Brothers Funeral Directors

The official dedication and subsequent unveiling took place Saturday 13th November 1920 – in this image can be seen Councillor WL Ainslie, the Reverend Fairfax Scott and the Reverend Jackson Bush – left of image – Mr Ainslie was a Feltham Urban District councillor whose wife was of the Lafone family.

This image shows the memorial in its original position at the junction of Twickenham Road, Bear Road, Hounslow Road and the road to Sunbury – today's Sunbury Way



Hanworth also had its Poppy Lady in the form Mrs Caroline Berry known colloquially as 'Ciss' – this is her with her Husband Charlie who was of the Middlesex Regiment. It would seem that there was such a characteristic of fund raising in the family as her mother collected such during the Boer War.

I shall read but a few of those who gave their lives – James Moses Batten 476569 Private formerly G/14037 The Buffs East Kent Regiment aged 29, Edwin Arthur Batten 10260 Private 20th Hussars age 23 both were Son's of George and Sophia Batten of 7 Lime Villas Twickenham Road Hanworth,

There was also a Cousin John Charles Batten 14006 Private 9th Battalion Royal Fusiliers killed in action 7th October 1916 aged 21 -

And one Arthur Lewcock 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment 'killed in action 1st July 1916 aged 36 – he was a grandson to Mr Lewcock that was blown up in a Mill explosion at Hanworth,



As you have heard many throughout the decades have given freely of their time towards and in remembrance of those who paid the final sacrifice

There are many events in the coming days both locally and across the world to mark this momentous but very sad occasion so please do attend.

Whether you wear the Poppy for love or martyrdom be sure at this time of the year you wear it with pride.