

ALL SAINTS
CHURCH

KINGS HEATH



POPPIES
INSTALLATION

1918-2018

Inspired by the success of the knitted Christmas Tree project which was displayed in All Saints Church for 2 years, ASCA [All Saints Community Arts] sought to build on the idea of community involvement in knitted projects. Earlier this year an appeal was launched for knitted, crocheted and felt poppies, to be mounted in a Community Art Installation to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice at the end of World War One.

The response has been overwhelming and way beyond expectation! All the poppies donated have been used in the artwork; any unused coloured flowers will be used in a project for the Easter Garden.

The number of poppies and flowers you can see in the artwork - most of which are from anonymous sources - are uncountable; as are the hours of effort and artistry, organisation, collection, mounting, sewing and erecting.

ASCA is extremely grateful to everyone from the congregation and the wider community - too numerous to mention - who volunteered to take part in the creation of this project.

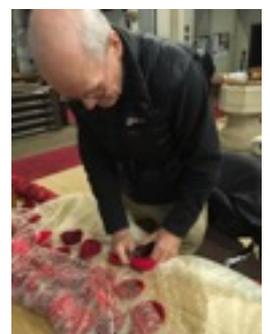
Many who have made poppies have taken the opportunity to express gratitude for, and to remember and commemorate, relatives and friends who lost their lives in the Great War. To these people we offer a very special 'Thank You'. Many are unknown to us; if you are one of these people we offer you, and any other visitors to the artwork, the opportunity to add your name and comments in the book provided.

The Poppies Installation will remain in All Saints church until Christmas and it is hoped everyone who has participated can visit to meditate on the completed work; to view their contribution, or that a representative can photograph the resulting artwork for those unable to visit in person.

Can you estimate the number of poppies and flowers in the artwork?

Write your guess and your contact details on the form provided on the entrance table, put it in the box provided, with £1 donation in the wall safe, for a chance to win a great prize!

The winner will be announced in January 2019.



WE REMEMBER

'For their tomorrow, we gave our today'

John Maxwell Edmonds

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 this now famous poem:

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' Field**



The 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.

What is your first impression of this artwork?

How does the red poppy 'speak' to your sense of loss, pain, remembrance, nostalgia, sadness, anger, indifference, hope?

What kind of life would we be leading if World War One had ended differently? Would you be here to see this artwork? What has changed?

In nature, decay is an inevitable part of the cycle of life which enables regeneration and rebirth. Have you noticed the meadow flowers at the base of the artwork? What for you is the significance of these, in relation to the poppies above?

Our hope is that this artwork will bring you to a point of mediation and thoughtfulness, and eventually, hopefulness and gratitude.