

The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance

Teacher & Adult Helper Notes

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Introduction

Through a variety of objects, photographs and interviews, the exhibition explores the manufacture of poppies in Scotland, the charitable work of the poppy appeal and presents a reflection on recent debates about what some regard as the politicisation of the poppy as a symbol.

The Poppy: A Symbol of Remembrance coincides with the centenary of the conclusion of the First World War, and concludes National Museums Scotland's commemorative programme of events and exhibitions relating to the conflict.

1. Visiting the Exhibition

(Please share this information with your adult helpers)

Important information

- Food and drink is not permitted
- Photography is not allowed
- The exhibition is based in gallery 7 and leads to the museum exit. Please exit via this door to assist with visitor flow and head back into the museum through the main entrance.
- We recommend you split your class into 3 groups, with 1 exploring the exhibition whilst the rest of the class explore the museum or other areas of the castle.

2. The Exhibition

This exhibition examines the history of the poppy and its emergence as a symbol of remembrance. There is one short film in the exhibition. Wall panels with text are dark maroon with labels and corresponding numbers beside each object or image. Large print labels are available within the exhibition.

It is divided into 5 sections (each section has an introductory panel):

Main introductory panel: *The Poppy a Symbol of Remembrance*. Introduces you and your class to the exhibition and the main themes it will explore, from remembrance to charity.

1. *A New Grief*: This section explores the new practices of mourning and remembrance that emerged from the First World War. An unknown soldier's memorial cross along with treasures sent home to families can be viewed in the case. There are also images of war memorials and a poppy sent home from the western front.
2. *From Remembrance to Charity*: Find out how the poppy became a symbol of remembering those who died and became a means of raising money to help those who survived. There is a large panel with John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields* poem and a propaganda poster for war bonds. The section also introduces Moina Michael and Anna Guerin and how they helped the poppy become a symbol of remembrance. Moina's poem *We shall keep the faith* is also displayed.
3. *The Poppy and Charity in Scotland*: This section looks at the Earl Haig Fund Scotland and the creation of Lady Haig Poppy Factory in 1926. There are images of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and Lady Dorothy Haig. The cases here show a number of badges and commemorative booklets and a number of poppy making tools. You can see original Scottish poppies along with a car poppy and collection boxes.
4. *Global Remembrance*: A display of remembrance flowers from 10 different countries along with a ceramic poppy from the Tower of London exhibition *Bloodswept Lands and Fields of Red*.
5. *Contested Ground*: This case explores what the poppy means to us today and how, for some, its meaning has changed in response to contemporary events. The objects on display include a variety of modern poppies; purple, white, black, a poppy hijab and a football armband and Rugby shirt. There is also a commemorative wreath laid by Mrs Anne Blair for her husband Lieutenant-Colonel David Blair alongside his image.

To the left of this case is an AV room which shows a series of interviews asking those contributing about their views on the poppy. The section is called 'Will you or won't you' and is a good point to finish the exhibition.

The exit of the exhibition is to the right hand side of the *Contested ground* case. On exiting you will see a statue of Earl Haig. If you plan to spend more time in the museum please re-enter using the main entrance.

3. Additional Resources

Back in class you can use these resources to help explore the themes of the exhibition further.

You can find images of some of the objects in the exhibition along with links to further WW1 related content in our museums online:

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-war-museum/whats-on/the-poppy/>

Discover more about the charities behind some of poppies on display:

Poppy Scotland

<https://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/>

Black Poppy Rose

<http://www.blackpoppyrose.org/wp/>

White Poppy

<http://www.ppu.org.uk/whitepoppy/>

Explore poetry from WW1 with the Scottish Poetry Library:

<http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/tags/world-war-i>

If you did not get a chance to visit the Scottish War Memorial there are images and further information about the building and its contents online:

<https://www.snwm.org/>

Questions or feedback?

If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please get in touch with us.

We'd also love to see any work your class produces after visiting the exhibition:

schools@nms.ac.uk @NtIMuseumsScot #ThePoppy