

9. We have made what should become a tradition!

The Second World War had a much greater effect on the School than the First, even though fewer OKS were killed.¹ The School was evacuated to Cornwall in 1940 and remained there until 1945. Canterbury was heavily bombed in 1942. The dining hall was wrecked and several other school buildings, including School House, the Priory classrooms and the Headmaster's house, were damaged. When the boys returned to Canterbury in October 1945, the physical signs of this local blitz were still apparent, not least in the Memorial Court. The city itself was also severely hit and the damage was visible for many years.



Service of Thanksgiving 1945: Montgomery reads the lesson

A Service of Thanksgiving “for the preservation of The King’s School during the late war, and for its safe return to Canterbury” was held in the Cathedral on 20 October 1945. Field Marshal Montgomery read the lesson and the newly enthroned Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher preached. The Captain of School, Alistair Kneller, then read the list of founders and benefactors and the names of those OKS known to have been killed in the Second World War

¹ 126 old boys were killed and there had been 290 boys in the School in the Summer Term of 1939.

(92 at this point).² The occasion was recalled in his sermon fifty years later by Michael Mayne, then a boy in Luxmoore House and now Dean of Westminster:

It's impossible for anyone now to imagine just what impact that Thanksgiving Service made on even the most chapel-resistant of us. We had come from those war years on the Cornish cliffs where the unpretentious hotel garage served as a chapel, hall and theatre, back to a battered Canterbury, the school buildings scarred by war, the Dining Hall flattened, the Green Court covered with trenches and marred by an underground air-raid shelter. And we came into this Cathedral, all its stained glass removed, but still a charismatic building in the shadow of which the school, whose ethos we now had to rediscover, had stood for centuries.³

As with the Great War, there was much debate on how to commemorate those killed in the latest conflict. In part this was a practical issue, because of the damage to the Memorial Court and to the undercroft below the Library. In 1946 it was even proposed that "the War Memorial Cross erected to the memory of old boys who fell in the 1914-1918 war should be moved from its present position and re-erected in a more appropriate spot in the garden at the back of the block of School buildings originally the Headmaster's House, such garden being altered and converted into a memorial garden".⁴

It would be just as visible as now, for the flint wall by the Norman Staircase would not be rebuilt. A path would lead up to it through an iron gate. From this position the Cross would dominate the memorial Court more grandly than it does now, and would be removed from the dirt of the traffic and inconveniences wrought by passers-by.⁵

This idea was soon abandoned, but the pressure for a 'visible memorial', favoured by the OKS Association, as opposed to a scholarship fund, was strong. *The Cantuarian* of August 1946 commented on the situation:

WAR MEMORIAL

At the time of writing we understand that no decision has been reached. Opinion seems to favour the establishment of an Endowment Fund, out of which sons of O.K.S. could be assisted to come to the School of their fathers. As no building is likely to be permitted for years, other than houses, the Editors venture to think that an Endowment Fund is good common-sense, and further venture to suggest (albeit with trepidation) to the Powers That Be that it is high time a start was made.⁶

In fact there was disagreement between the Headmaster and the OKS Association, with the opinions of the Dean and Chapter a further complication. A proposal "to build an Art School in the Green Court, facing the Dining Hall" appears in the draft appeal and was

² *The Cantuarian*, December 1945, pp. 166-72. In addition to a full report on the service from David Edwards, the Dean's Address of Welcome and the Archbishop's sermon were printed as well as extracts from the *Evening News* and the *Yorkshire Post*.

³ *The Cantuarian*, Autumn 1995, pp. 14-15.

⁴ Governors minutes, 9 October 1946, item 21.

⁵ *The Cantuarian*, August 1946, p. 125. Cf. OKS Committee minutes, 12 September 1946.

⁶ *The Cantuarian*, December 1947, p. 191.

described in *The Cantuarian* in 1946, but then dropped.⁷ The OKS Association discussed several different schemes, and negotiations dragged on.⁸ When a leaflet on the War Memorial Appeal was finally issued in 1948, it was noncommittal on what might be done beyond the tablet with names in the undercroft. “As so much must depend upon the total sum raised, it would be premature at this stage to specify the further projects for which it is hoped that this appeal will make provision.” The possibilities of a General Endowment Fund and “additional buildings, as, for example, an Assembly Hall” were mentioned, with the diplomatic conclusion that any available sums “shall be used by the Governors, in agreement with the Committee of the O.K.S. Association, in such a way as it is considered will be of most permanent advantage to the School”.⁹ In the event, the Art School at Lardergate was built with the assistance of money from Australia and opened by the Duchess of Kent in 1951, and Shirley got his Assembly Hall in 1957.



Proposed Art School, designed by John Denman 1947, with Shirley’s annotation

⁷ *The Cantuarian*, August 1946, p. 131, where the building is described as “an Art and Music School”. Cf. *The Cantuarian*, December 1946, p. 51. A picture of the architect’s scheme appeared in *The Cantuarian*, July 1947, opposite p. 122. It was suggested that the Dean and Chapter might meet the cost. The draft appeal is in the School Archives.

⁸ See especially OKS Committee minutes, 24 June, 29 July, 15 October 1947 and 8 March 1948.

⁹ *An Appeal for a War Memorial*, 1948. *The Cantuarian*, July 1948, p. 335 noted that this had been printed and stated that the two objects were the inscription of names and an Endowment Fund; it then added “We should very much like an Assembly Hall too!” Shirley’s admittedly partisan memorandum on the disagreements, dated 8 July 1947, is in the School Archives. Much of the correspondence on the matter is also in the Archives. Cf. OKS Committee minutes, where the matter was regularly discussed from 4 February 1946 onwards.

Canon Shirley in particular was disappointed that more money was not raised by the Appeal. *The Cantuarian* (and one can detect Shirley's influence) observed in December 1948:

A list of subscribers complete to date will be found elsewhere in the Magazine. The response was feeble. Some reasons are obvious, namely, that in 1948 money is "tight", as it was not in 1945 and 1946; the "atmosphere" of 1948 is prejudicial to the success of a memorial of the last war when the menace of a third is in all our minds. Again, only a small sum was asked for, and a wise principle of begging seems to be to ask for far more than you expect to get. None the less it is astonishing.¹⁰

At least the restoration of the Memorial Court and the creation of the memorial tablet went ahead without too much difficulty. An inscription was added to the war memorial itself – AND IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945¹¹ – and the new panel on the exterior wall of the Memorial Chapel was designed by Humphrey Goldsmith, O.K.S. This was different in style to the earlier memorial, the wording was slightly altered – 'Remember these who fell in the Second World War' – and the names, which included a Junior School master, were not in colour, though the dates of leaving were in gold.¹²

The unveiling took place on Speech Day, Monday 25 July 1949. The event was widely publicised – in the national as well as in the local press – not least because of the presence of Field Marshal Montgomery:

The ceremony opened with the hymn *O Valiant hearts, who to your glory came*, played by the Military Band and led by the School Choir. The hymn ended, the Headmaster read a short passage from St. John's Gospel and the names of the hundred and eleven Fallen, whose names are inscribed upon the new memorial plaque. Then the President of the O.K.S. Association, Colonel C. H. Budd, addressed Field Marshal Lord Montgomery:

"Sir, on behalf of the members of the King's School, both past and present, I ask you to unveil this Tablet which commemorates the Names of the Fallen."

Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, having read "The Passing of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth" from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, pulled apart the flags with which the Memorial was veiled.

The Archbishop of Canterbury then dedicated the Memorial...

The dedication was followed by Versicles and Responses, Our Lord's Prayer, and a prayer for the Fallen...

The School Thanksgiving Prayer was followed by the Blessing and the National Anthem. The School Bugler in Naval uniform, with representatives of the Army and Royal Air Force, sounded the Last Post and Reveille. As the last note died away we turned and remembered the inscription on the earlier War Memorial:

"LEST WE FORGET"

¹⁰ *The Cantuarian*, December 1948, p. 14. See also e.g. *Illustrated London News*, 6.8.1949, p. 193; *The Sphere*, 6.8.1949, p. 197.

¹¹ The 'Second World War' was recognised by the British Government as the official title of the recent conflict in 1948; the Great War (often just known as 'the war'), thus became the First World War.

¹² Some of the designs for the tablet are in the School Archives.

The Memorial Court was the centre of interest during Speech Day, and especially the Memorial Tablet of Hoptonwood Stone in a Portland Stone surround in the Classical style, surmounted by the School Arms. The O.K.S. Association contributed the cost of the Memorial, which indeed enhances the beauty of the Norman Arches.¹³

It took a few years after 1945 for a pattern of Remembrance to be established. During the Second World War, official commemoration of Armistice Day and the silence had been suspended. In 1945 Armistice Day was a Sunday and the School had just returned from Cornwall. This was an opportunity to resume the pre-war tradition, though there were no boys left from the 1930s School.

On Armistice Day the School flag moved down the flagstaff and flew at half-mast... on the first stroke of eleven from the Cathedral clock, the Captain of School reverently placed a wreath on the School War Memorial. We remembered the fallen of both bitter wars. Especially did we think on those who had spent part of their lives in our community, before going forth from us to make their supreme sacrifice.

The School, with the smallest at the front, the masters, the staff and a few O.K.S. in uniform, formed a crescent round the Memorial Cross. On either side were the evidences of war. The Green Court looked as if a major battle had been fought on it, the Library had boarded windows and the Dining Hall was a sorry sight of rubble or fallen blocks of stone. The rebuilding of the foundations was slowly progressing. We too would have to look to the foundations, both for the world's and the School's future prosperity.

The simplicity of the Service strengthened its sincerity and we were the better for it.

The flag moved up and fluttered proudly over the Green Court again, a symbol of our determination not to forget.¹⁴

The following year (1946) it was decided by the Government that the Armistice Day ceremony would move to a Sunday and what was already, for many, called Remembrance Sunday.¹⁵ Any sense that this was a celebration of the victory in 1918 – something that had largely disappeared in the 1930s anyway – was now entirely gone. It was clear, at the School as elsewhere, that the Day was now recalling both wars.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The School held its own Memorial Service this year in the Cathedral, and later assembled in the Memorial Court to observe the Silence. The Captain of School laid a wreath on the Memorial and after the Silence the School placed the poppies

¹³ The Cantuarian, December 1949 between pp. 296 and 297.

¹⁴ The Cantuarian, December 1945, p. 176. The Preachers Book recorded: "11.0 'Silence' Memorial Court".

¹⁵ For the discussions behind this decision, see Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory* (1994), pp. 215-21. There had been some Remembrance Sunday services, mainly for veterans, since 1920. The School calendar for 1946 listed 'Armistice Day', but the Preachers Book records this as Remembrance Day and notes: "11.0 'Silence' Memorial Court".

they had been wearing on the Memorial in memory of the O.K.S. who gave their lives in both World Wars.¹⁶

In 1947, as new boy Robin Burgess told his parents: “We had 2 minutes silence at 11 o/c this morning when the wreaths were laid on the school cenotaph after which we all put our poppies round the base according to custom.”¹⁷ In 1948, the Preachers Book recorded: “10. Morning Service (Undercroft)” and “Scholars to Cathedral Service 10.45”. From 1950 onwards, however, “10.45 Service of Remembrance at War Memorial” became a regular event:

We have made what should become a tradition! The Morning Service was held in the Memorial Court; the Band played the hymns and the National Anthem, and the buglers the Last Post and Reveille; the Captain of School laid the wreath at the Memorial Cross.¹⁸

The report in the following year added that “afterwards the Captain of the School led the long file which passed before the memorial, everyone leaving their poppies at its foot”.¹⁹ A tradition had indeed been established.²⁰



Speech Day 1954: from *The Tatler*, reproduced in *The Cantuarian*

A photograph from *The Tatler* published in *The Cantuarian* of December 1954 shows the School Monitors headed by Roger Symon putting roses on the war memorial on Speech

¹⁶ The Cantuarian, December 1946, p. 9. The Preachers Book recorded: “Wreath was placed on the memorial after the 2 minute Silence”. The Headmaster, who was Vice Dean at the time, was giving the address in the Cathedral service. See: K.G. 16.11.1946.

¹⁷ Robin Burgess, letter to parents, 9.11.47. Archives box A 123.

¹⁸ The Cantuarian, December 1950, p. 9.

¹⁹ The Cantuarian, December 1951, p. 237.

²⁰ This tradition eventually appeared in the Blue Book of 1967: “The Memorial Court: After the service in the Memorial Court on Remembrance Sunday, all place their poppies on the War Memorial.”

Day.²¹ In the notes prepared in 1962 for new Headmaster Peter Newell by Miss Milward, Canon Shirley's Secretary, it was observed that "after the Speeches these [i.e. roses] are customarily placed on the War Memorial but of late years many boys omit to do this". She also noted:

The War Memorial is 'dressed' for Speech Day week-end with greenery, and a poppy wreath and sprays as for Remembrance Sunday; the wreath being moved to the Green Court side of the Cross on Speech Day and a wreath of red roses being put in front of the Cross.²²

It is not clear when these customs finally ended. It may well have been in 1967 when Speech Day moved from Monday to Thursday and was thus no longer part of an extended OKS weekend. In 2016 the Captain of School George Nairac, who had noticed the reference in the Blue Book, suggested in his Speech Day address that "an old practice is revived. When you leave here, please place your rose on the war memorial, to commemorate those who have fallen in conflict, from this school and beyond, as we remember the Battle of the Somme one hundred years on."²³ Many did so.

While it is possible to trace what happened on Remembrance Sunday, at least in outline – there were no service sheets and there is no record of the form of the service until the 1960s – it is far harder to be sure what it was supposed to mean, either on the part of the School authorities or, even more difficult, in the minds of the boys. For a number of years the emotional focus was on the Second World War – not surprisingly in view of the fact that it was the more recent conflict and a few members of staff had served. A steady stream of films, including *The Cruel Sea* (1953) and *Ill Met by Moonlight* (1957) by OKS directors Charles Frend and Michael Powell, kept the War in the popular imagination. The continued importance of the CCF – successor of the OTC – was also a factor not least as National Service continued until 1960.

The 1960s saw significant shifts in attitudes, especially among the young, to war in general and to the Great War in particular. This had been prefigured in 1950 when Upper Sixth former Antony Hoare, later Professor of Computing at Oxford and a Fellow of the Royal Society, launched an attack on the CCF in *The Cantuarian*: "our system of military training in the School is a glaring inconsistency with our noble ideals... the whole system of intolerance and hatred implied by war, which persecutes rather than persuades, a spirit alien to our School in all other respects, is inculcated into us when we are young and unable to resist it... The corps is an institution opposed to all the principles this School stands for."²⁴ The next issue published a temperate reply from Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Smythe who had been at King's from 1909 to 1912. "Certainly all of us who took any part in the last World War (I personally happen to have seen active service with an Infantry Battalion in two World Wars), can only wish to avoid any further destruction of lives and property, let alone the crippling effect of the cost of rearmament to our national economy..." He went on to emphasise the importance of discipline, especially in an army.²⁵

²¹ The Tatler, 11 August 1954, p. 222; The Cantuarian, December 1954, opp. p. 15.

²² KSC Archives box H 14a.

²³ His speech is in the Archives.

²⁴ The Cantuarian, December 1950, pp. 82-3.

²⁵ The Cantuarian, March 1951, pp. 155-6.

The fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War was an opportunity for *The Cantuarian* editorial to encapsulate the fashionable interpretation of 1914:

Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new!

Thus our predecessors of exactly fifty years ago ended the Editorial of their June issue, without any mention of that impending cataclysm which still darkens the mind of our Western civilization. As we look back today, it seems a conflict conducted by the obstinacy and inflexibility of old men, after it was made inevitable by the failure of Old World diplomacy to extract either compromise or reasonable solution from the autocrats of Europe. And though compared with the Second World War, the First may seem only a minor struggle, it has undoubtedly had a greater impact on our lives, not just because it destroyed the flower of our country's youth, but also because it brought in its wake further revolutionary upheavals, first pulling down the dynasties whose crumbling decay had originally engendered such chaos, then erecting other, defenceless, states whose pitiful weakness was to lead to conflict once again.

Whilst the declaration of war produced a sudden enthusiasm, which gave the whole nation an exciting unity almost overnight, few realized that the horrors of the conflict would be more appalling than any that Europe had witnessed for three hundred years. As these gradually became known, and as casualties grew with the inadequacy of a command quite unable to fight a modern war, so the soldier in the trenches turned to the negative bitterness and despair that were uppermost in Wilfred Owen's mind when he wrote the lines:

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

It is not difficult to see how such moods led to the moral vacuum of the inter-war years and the persistent doctrine of pacifism which paralysed Britain and France in the same period.

And now on the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of war it would surely be appropriate for us to consider whether we have learnt the lessons that the laying down of so many lives at such great cost has put before us. We may only hope that in the event of another crisis the representatives of the nations may not display that intractability and lack of statesmanship which forced gigantic conflict on all the nations of Europe in 1914, although not one of them wanted it. And let us here make every effort always to keep open minds about our problems. Here, too, where we endeavour to preserve with our traditions what of the past seems to us beneficial, let us make constant re-appraisal: so that peace may not dull the senses and the imagination; so that what we do by tradition may always be a source of strength and inspiration to us, rather than evidence of minds that prefer the glories of the past to the reality of the present.

*The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.*²⁶

This strongly worded piece provoked a critical response from OKS Kenneth Dickson (at King's 1902-06) who had served in the RAMC from August 1914, but it was the editorial's view that would become the new orthodoxy.²⁷

Something of the same attitude can be seen in a poem by Max Findlay, who had been at the School from 1965 to 1969. 'Remembrance Sunday (Lines on a Service conducted at School)' was published in 1978.²⁸

I stood in the cold, deadborn morning,
An enforced sacrifice
To the undying worm of remembrance.
Watching, hearing
A grey-haired, age old religion make an Idol
Of the common enemy of Man.
Every buttonhole exhibited the red stigma
Of counterfeited sorrow for the Unknown Soldier.
I stood, disgusted, at Death's Danegeld.

Such responses were not uncommon in the 1960s and for many more years thereafter. Generational shifts, the end of National Service, and the impact of other conflicts, especially Korea and Vietnam, meant that the Remembrance service was losing any sense of a direct connection with the Great War in the minds of most who were present.

Copies of the Remembrance Day service from the time of Peter Newell (Headmaster 1962-75) survive in the School Archives. The opening reading was WH Auden's *Epitaph for the Unknown Soldier*:

To save your world, you asked this man to die.
Would this man, could he see you now, ask why?

The hymns were 307 ('Think, O Lord, in mercy'), 68 ('Turn back, O Man') and 480 ('Our God, our help in ages past') and the reading was from Wisdom 1, verses 1-9.²⁹ There was also a prayer to remember "those who have given their lives in defence of Justice and Freedom, and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind especially past members of this school", followed by the Binyon "They shall grow not old..." The World Wars, however, were not referred to explicitly in the prayers as listed. The emphasis was on peace, and the School's contribution was only alluded to in passing.³⁰

From the 1960s to the 1980s the only mention of Remembrance Sunday in *The Cantuarian* was usually, if there was anything at all, to the music played by the school band.

²⁶ The Cantuarian, August 1964, pp. 135-6. The final quotation is from 'East Coker' in TS Eliot's *Four Quartets*. See also Seldon and Walsh, p. 227. They quote from this editorial and describe it as "a complete case for the prosecution".

²⁷ The Cantuarian, December 1964 p. 261-2.

²⁸ If They Gave Medals, Poems by Max Findlay, p. 37.

²⁹ The Cantuarian, December 1962, p. 237 mentions the first two hymns.

³⁰ KSC Archives, box H 14a.

There was considerable variety, with the ‘Dead March’ from Handel’s *Saul* popular as well as the *Solemn Melody* of Walford Davies and Mendelssohn’s ‘Pilgrims’ Chorus’.³¹ The 1975 report added a comment on the weather, which may often have left more of an impression on those present than the solemnity of the occasion:

Despite the low temperature, which should now be expected and not feared, we persevered, with fingers benumbed, pages flapping and well-wrapped in scarves, in a performance of a beautiful version of Tchaikowsky’s *Marche Slave*, a work too well-known to need describing. The work was cut before the “jolly” theme was reached, and the first ten bars were repeated, ending with a sombre recapitulation of the main theme by the saxophones.³²



Remembrance Sunday 1977; Chris Tinker conducts (Photograph: NR Jorgensen)

A photograph in *The Cantuarian* of December 1977 shows the central role of the band, positioned in the middle of the Memorial Court, and the scarves are in evidence.³³

In the same period, there were several war-related plays and presentations. In 1968 the Walpole Society read Sherriff’s *Journey’s End* and *The Cantuarian* merely commented that it was: “a modern play on the horrors of the First World War trench warfare. We found it interesting and stimulating.”³⁴ In 1977, it was a house play put on by Walpole House. This time the reviewer was more impressed:

³¹ See *The Cantuarian*, December 1961, p. 44; December 1962, p. 283; December 1963, p. 66; December 1965, p. 63; December 1966, p. 319; December 1967, p. 66; December 1968, p. 58; December 1969, p. 54; December 1970, p. 53; December 1972, p. 63; December 1973, p. 46; December 1974, p. 45; December 1975, p. 40; December 1978, p. 61; December 1980, p. 78; December 1981, p. 52; December 1982, p. 68; December 1983, p. 58.

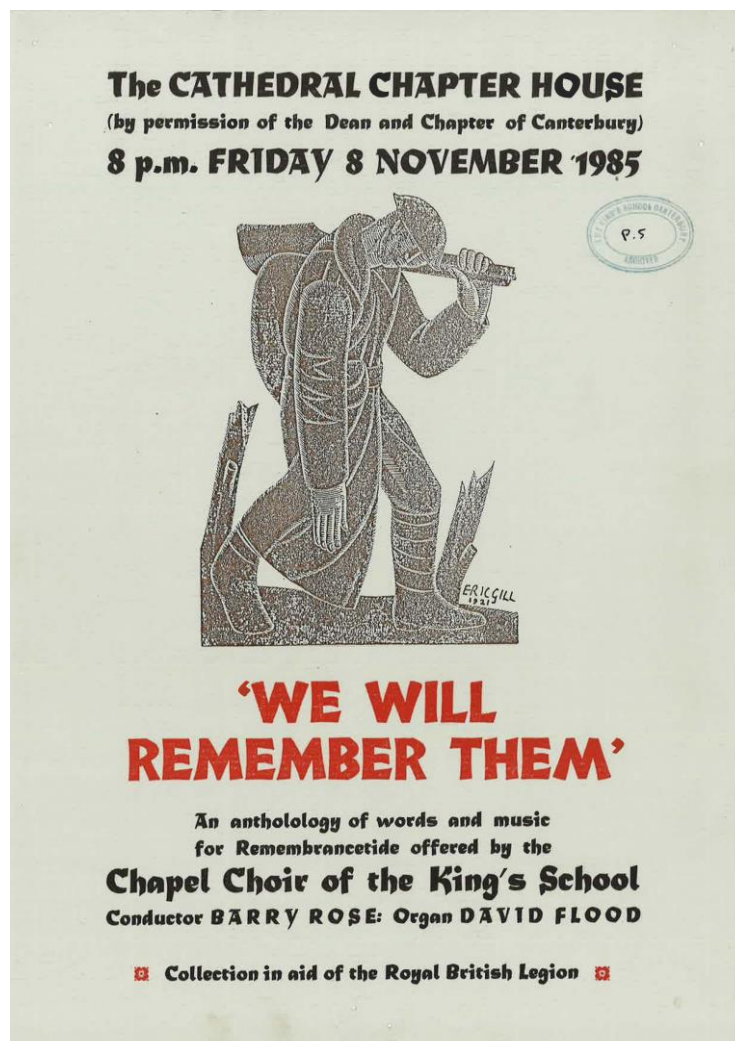
³² *The Cantuarian*, December 1975, p. 40.

³³ *The Cantuarian*, December 1977, opp. p. 20.

³⁴ *The Cantuarian*, April 1968, p. 137.

Journey's End was first staged in 1928; it was significant, for it broke the conspiracy of silence that had pervaded a nation appalled by war. It is no less important now, and the good production should recapture not just wit, not just history, but everything, the entire atmosphere of the war. And it was atmosphere that moved it into the sun.³⁵

Between these two productions, Peter Ustinov's *The Unknown Soldier and his Wife* was the School House play in 1974. This was an anti-war piece on war through the ages. The *Cantuarian* reviewer made no mention of the First World War, nor indeed of the content; just the players.³⁶



An Anthology of Words and Music 1985

On Friday 8 November 1985 there was 'An Anthology of Words and Music for Remembrance' in the Chapter House. This was a deliberately wide-ranging reflection on war in general and included two poems by Owen ('1914' and 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'), but also poets of the Second World War and earlier writers such as Prudentius and John Bunyan. *The Cantuarian* reviewer, Chaplain Peter Johnson, observed that the anthology "brought out

³⁵ *The Cantuarian*, December 1977, p. 15 (and illustration opposite).

³⁶ *The Cantuarian* December 1974, pp. 21-2.

in a balanced way the different themes that the waging of war brings to mind. Sorrow, resignation, faith, confidence, futility, hope..." but only alluded to the two World Wars in passing. On the other hand the cover of the programme included Eric Gill's 1921 'Westward Ho!' image of an infantryman, based on a David Jones drawing, and Binyon's 'We Will Remember Them', and there was a collection for the Royal British Legion.³⁷

Adrian Gregory's 1994 book on *The Silence of Memory*, an important study of Armistice Day 1919-1946, assumed in its conclusion that the Remembrance Day ceremony was now irrelevant and out of date. "The day no longer carries the mystical conviction that it should be a transforming experience, one that makes sense of all the suffering and which re-dedicates the nation to high aspirations. ... the language which surrounds the ritual is dead".³⁸ As it turned out, and to the surprise of many, the opposite proved to be the case, both nationally and at the King's School.

The 'emotive power' of Remembrance Sunday saw something of a revival in the 1990s. Chaplain John Thackray's 1993 sermon, published in *The Cantuarian*, reflected a widespread view of the occasion, both in its comparison between the two World Wars and in its extension of remembrance to other conflicts.

The reality of war, however noble the cause or honourable the sentiments which impelled its waging, stands against false piety. It is the reality of the Great War, whose seventy-fifth anniversary of ending was last Thursday, that predominates images of Remembrance Sunday. Fuelled by the poetry of Owen, Sassoon and Graves, there is a harsh questioning of values which cannot be escaped. The Great War has come in retrospect to epitomise the futility of war. The poppies that we wear can be seen over countless Belgian graves of people like ourselves. Today, we remember them and especially the 147 OKS whose names, inscribed under the Schoolroom, we pass every day. We remember also the 112 OKS who died in the Second War and the many people of our community of Canterbury who also died while our school was safe in Cornwall. The reasons for the Second War were perhaps more understandable than those for the first, but there were still too many victims. The wars in Korea and Vietnam; the conflict in the Falklands and the Gulf War: these are all reminders that armed violence is not a thing of the past as the tragedies of Northern Ireland, of Somalia and of the nations of Yugoslavia too clearly show.³⁹

At the same time, the First World War took on greater importance within the educational experience of the pupils. GCSE was first examined in 1988. The Modern World History course meant that the First World War was taught, initially for the Shells, as background to the inter-war years, and then as part of the syllabus itself. From time to time the War Poets were also taught for English Literature. John Thackray took a small group of pupils to Ypres in 1997, and a more formal trip, for a party of 39 pupils, was instigated in

³⁷ The Cantuarian, December 1985, p. 42.

³⁸ Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, pp. 226-7.

³⁹ The Cantuarian, December 1993, pp. 20-21. John Thackray usually mentioned the Remembrance Sunday service in his 'Chaplain's Notes': see e.g. The Cantuarian, December 1991, p. 40; December 1993, p. 35; Autumn Term 1995, p. 14; Autumn Term 1997, p. 16; Autumn Term 1998, p. 16.

1998. This then turned into an expedition for the entire Shell year group.⁴⁰ It was led by the History Department, with some help initially from English and Religious Studies. The itinerary usually included acknowledging OKS at Sanctuary Wood (William Rowan-Robinson), Essex Farm (Basil Maclear) and the Menin Gate (Cedric Crowley, Ross Ferguson, George Heale and Douglas Northcote). The Ypres trip was suspended by Nicholas Clements (Headmaster 2008-10) as a gesture towards cost-cutting, but revived in 2010. For a few years in the early 21st century the History Department also organised an annual visit to the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum coupled with a presentation on the First World War at the National Army Museum, often by Andy Robertshaw. Andy later gave several war-related talks at the School.

Most of the service sheets from 1987 onwards have survived in the Archives. The general pattern of the ceremony was a mixture of hymns, prayers, readings, the silence and wreath laying. From 1993 onwards ‘Abide with me’ was almost always sung, with ‘I vow to thee my country’ a fixture from 2002 and ‘Eternal Father, strong to save’ from 2004. The reading from Micah 4, verses 1-5, was also constant from 2005 to 2016, replacing Isaiah 2, verses 2-4 – “nation shall not lift up sword against nation” – which had been common from 1992. The National Anthem was always sung: verses 1, 2 and 5 (no. 415 in the School hymn book) had been used in the 1970s; but just two verses are printed from 1987. Up to 1993 the second verse used was Hickson’s ‘Not on this land alone / But be God’s mercies known’; thereafter ‘Spirit of Love and life / Healing the nations’ strife...’, which was not in the School hymn book, was preferred.⁴¹

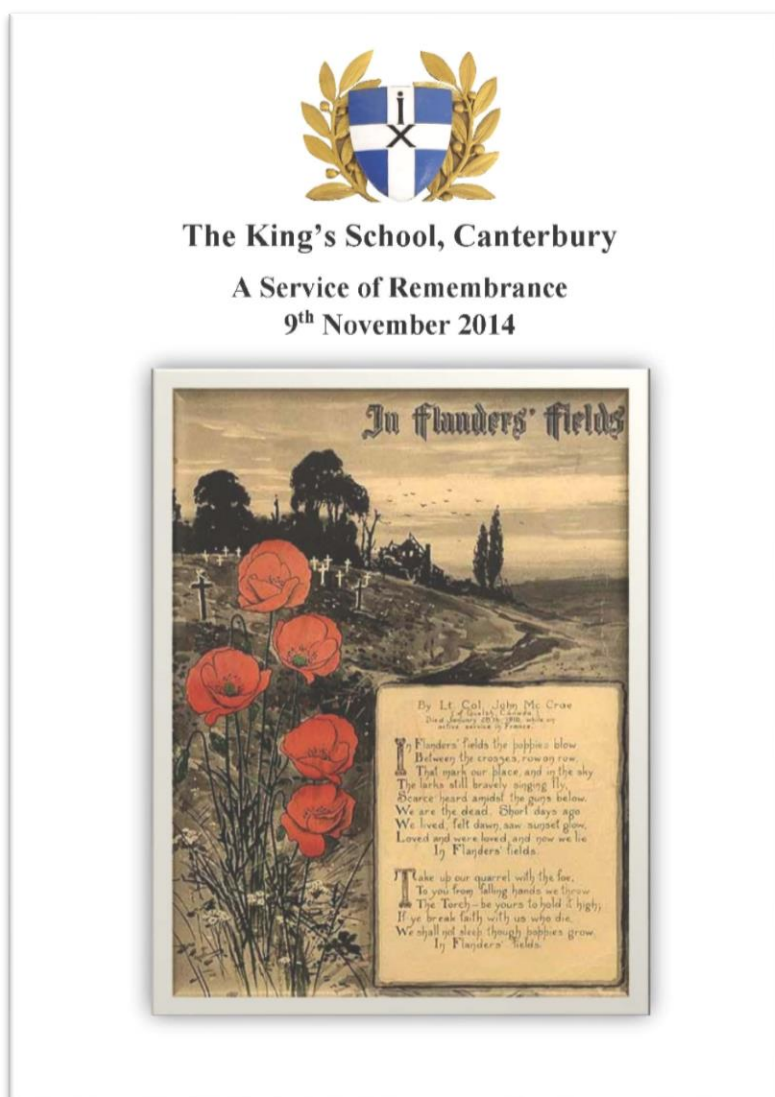
From 1987 to 2007 it was normal for there to be two or three non-biblical readings. These were mostly verse and mostly related to the First World War. Wilfred Owen’s ‘The Parable of the Old Man and the Young’ was easily the favourite poem, occurring in, at least, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2006 and 2007, with other Owen verses in 1988, 1989 and 1991. Siegfried Sassoon was read in 1987, 1992, 1995 and 2005, with a different poem on each occasion. Lucy Whitmell, with an extract from ‘Christ in Flanders’ in 1997, 1998 and 1999, Bernard Moore, with ‘War’ in 1995 and 1998, and John McCrae, with ‘In Flanders Fields’ in 1996 and 2001, also recurred. Readings relating to the Second World War featured in two or three services, but extracts of a more generally pacific nature were more common. Allusions to present day conflicts often appeared in the prayers, but the details are unrecorded.

The British Legion campaign for the revival of the 11 November silence from 1995 onwards had an effect. In 1999 there was a voluntary observance of the two minutes silence in a ceremony in the Memorial Chapel, with wreaths laid by the two memorial plaques. This was part of a short service conducted by the Chaplain. The silence is still observed. In 2006,

⁴⁰ The Cantuarian, December 1997, p. 21, Lent & Summer 1998, pp. 148-50 and Lent & Summer 1999, p. 150. The Shells comprise the first year group in the senior school: i.e. 13-14 year olds (Year 9). Other schools had been visiting the Western Front for some years. Cf. Seldon and Walsh, pp. 204-5.

⁴¹ The first King’s School Hymn Book of 1947 has two of the ‘traditional’ verses of the National Anthem, with ‘Thy choicest gifts in store’ as the second, as well as three additional verses from WE Hickson. The first musical edition in 1960 retained these five verses. The 1989 revision only included one of Hickson’s verses: ‘Not on this land alone...’ The 1999 revision omitted all of Hickson’s verses, leaving just the original two.

the names of those killed in the Great War were read out at the main Remembrance Sunday service, a custom that has continued.⁴²



Remembrance Sunday service sheet 2014

Commemoration of the Second World War meanwhile has been largely driven by remembrance of the evacuation to Cornwall. A plaque was placed in the Carlyon Bay Hotel in July 1995 and there was a service in Canterbury Cathedral in October to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the return. The opening of a new day house, named Carlyon, was another opportunity for survivors to gather at Canterbury in 2005 and there were reunions at Carlyon Bay, most recently and probably for the last time, in 2015. The unveiling of a plaque from the Submariners Association to honour Victoria Cross winner Peter Roberts in 2018 was a 'one-

⁴² The service sheets of 2006 and succeeding years indicate 'The King's School Boys who gave their lives in the wars of the 20th century', but in fact it was just the Great War names that were read out. This was corrected in 2014. Second World War names may be read out on future occasions.

off' event. The eightieth anniversary of the outbreak may encourage greater focus on this War.⁴³

The Great War Centenary inspired historical research as well as a greater focus on commemoration. A Roll of Honour website had been launched in January 2010. This was created and run by John Hamblin, a King's School parent, and covered both World Wars, as well as the three OKS winners of the Victoria Cross. The names of twelve OKS fatalities, discovered since the original memorial was created, as well as the two masters who had been omitted, were added to the Great War plaque in 2014. Four further names (three OKS and one master) were later found and will be added in due course.⁴⁴ There was a King's Week exhibition on 'The King's School in 1914', which was also shown in the Beaney, and later in the Chapter House as part of the Cathedral's commemoration. In 2014, representatives of the School laid wreaths in the Menin Gate ceremony as the culmination of the Shell Ypres Trip. For Remembrance Sunday there was a special service sheet, and the CCF played a more prominent role. A King's School plaque was added to those of other schools in St George's Memorial Church at Ypres in 2017.⁴⁵ A King's Week exhibition in 2018 focused on the poetry of the War, highlighting OKS writers, including Dyneley Hussey, James Yates and Joseph Courtney.

The shift in attitudes since the 1980s and 1990s, not just in the perception of the War's historical importance but also in its continued emotional appeal, has been much commented on.⁴⁶ At the same time there has been something of a disjunction between serious scholarship and popular attitudes.⁴⁷ The response of the King's School has lain somewhat uneasily between these two. The War will continue to be studied in the classroom but its wider resonance with staff and even more with pupils may be fragile. It remains to be seen how far such attention to the Great War will survive the centenary of its conclusion.

⁴³ Anthony Seldon and David Walsh will publish a book on Public Schools and the Second World War in 2019.

⁴⁴ The additional names are: OKS William Frederic Burgess, William Aubrey (Spooner) Fortescue and James Turstin Wright and former master Englebert Lutyens Rothwell Horley.

⁴⁵ The plaque, which had been installed thanks to the good offices of OKS David Loveridge, was dedicated during the Shell Ypres trip.

⁴⁶ E.g. Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, 1914-1918 Understanding the Great War, p. 5; cf. Jay Winter, Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History and other work by him.

⁴⁷ See for example: Brian Bond, The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History (2002), Daniel Todman, The Great War: Myth and Memory (2005), David Reynolds, The Long Shadow (2013), etc.

