



Ideas for remembrance

13 November 2016



The period leading up to and including Remembrance Sunday each year is a time that can easily turn into a celebration of war. As Quakers, we have compassion for all those affected by war including injured and disabled soldiers and civilians everywhere, and their families. Most importantly, our faith calls us to work unceasingly for peace and to live in “that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars”. How can we use this period to be true to our beliefs without offending those who may be mourning the loss of loved ones?



Wearing a white poppy

The white poppy is a symbol of remembrance that explicitly says “No more wars. No more killing. Let us work for peace”. The **red poppy** has gradually become a symbol of support for the British military, but is also about raising money to support injured and disabled veterans. Many Quakers choose to wear both. You can use the white poppy to engage in conversations about the true meaning of

remembrance, which is about reminding ourselves of the horrors of war so that we are not bound to repeat past mistakes. The promise was made to millions who died in World War I “Never Again”. How are we honouring that today?

Supporting Veterans for Peace

Veterans for Peace UK now lay a wreath of white and red poppies at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, each year as part of the official ceremony there on Remembrance Sunday. Those who wish to support this commemorative act are asked to congregate at Whitehall Place, dressed in dark sombre clothes as for a formal funeral. This is a solemn ceremony so there will be no banners or placards. Please check www.vfpuk.org for the exact timings and details.



Other London events

A more informal laying of white poppies takes place each year at the stone to commemorate conscientious objectors in Tavistock Square, London, organised by the Peace Pledge Union. This takes place at 12 noon, Sunday 13 November. There is no dress code.

Laying a wreath of white poppies at your local war memorial

Some local meetings lay a wreath of white (and red) poppies at a local war memorial or other public place. Be sure to do so in a spirit of dignity and respect, liaising with your local branch of the Royal British Legion and Churches Together. If you write to your local mayor you may get permission to do it as part of the formal commemorative event.

If you are organising an event locally please let us know! Share your story at www.quaker.org.uk/stories so that other Quakers can be inspired.

Resources for remembrance

Free from Friends House:

The White Poppy is a new leaflet for Quakers produced by General Meeting for Scotland.

Remembrance: Should Friends take part? is a leaflet from the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) that offers helpful guidance for meetings being invited to local parades, church services and other remembrance events.

Advice for Friends in times of war offers guidance from Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) to help Friends cope with the challenging context of Britain being at war.

The new tide of militarisation briefing documents the government's ongoing attempts to build public support for, and improve recruitment into, the armed forces.

Witnessing for peace on the centenary of World War I is a resource pack for Quaker meetings with a wealth of useful information and materials you can use. This includes a new facsimile newspaper for 2016, highlighting the events of 1916 and relating them to today.

Approaches to Remembrance and First World War Commemorations from Pax Christi suggests prayers and readings for remembrance services.

Available online:

The white feather diaries: www.whitefeatherdiaries.org is an online project that serialises the diaries of five people who lived during, and opposed, World War I.

Unseen March: www.unseenmarch.org.uk is a short film with online resources and action ideas for pupils, parents and teachers questioning the militarisation of schools.

Propaganda in the Classroom: <http://qlist.quaker.org.uk/news/news-release-government-accused-military-propaganda-classroom>

Remembrance for Today is out of print but available to download from Movement for Abolition of War website www.abolishwar.org.uk/downloads.

Available for purchase:

Remembrance time is a good opportunity to promote **Conscience** and **Conviction** to your local schools. **Conviction**, the secondary-level resource, includes activities to help young people consider how we should remember those who have died in past wars without glorifying war (£5 each, or download free from www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education).

Refusing to kill: conscientious objection and human rights in the First World War is a useful resource about COs from the Peace Pledge Union (£10).

We Will Remember Them, from The Movement for the Abolition of War, offers services, reflections, prayers, songs and readings for Remembrance Sunday (£3).

Never Again and other World War I peace posters from www.nfpb.org.uk (£1.50 each).

The above materials are available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Tel: 020 7663 1030; Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk; Web: www.quaker.org.uk/shop.

This year you can now order a full box of 100 white poppies to sell or give away at your Meeting House direct from the Quaker Centre Bookshop (see order form). This is a new partnership with the Peace Pledge Union and we encourage local meetings to consider buying a full box if you do not already do so. Many more people would wear the white poppy if they knew they could get one at their local meeting house.