Ideas to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War
About the Centenary

There are to be three days of remembrance to mark the centenary of World War One. The key dates for the people to remember the war will be the beginning of the conflict, the Battle of the Somme and Armistice Day.

Events are being planned for

- 4 August, 2014 (the centenary of the day the war started),
- 1 July, 2016 (100 years after the Battle of the Somme) and
- 11 November, 2018 (the centenary of the day the war finished).

Other Significant Dates: These are likely to be the Battles of Jutland (31 May-1 June 2016), the Somme (1 July -18 November 2016) and Passchendaele (31 July – 6 November 2017)

The First World War claimed the lives of over 16 million people, involved over 100 countries from Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and Europe and had an impact on the lives of everyone in every town and village in our country. One hundred years later, we are all connected to the First World War, either through our own family history or because of the way it changed the history of our communities.

Across the world, nations, communities and individuals of all ages will come together to mark, commemorate and remember the lives of those who lived, fought and died in the First World War. Already in Amiens, there is a restaurant that has 20 dates reserved in April to host lunches for the Australians who are going to visit their grandfathers’ graves on or about ANZAC day.

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of local, regional, national and international cultural and educational organisations. For more information, visit the website www.1914.org/partners/
Marking the beginning of the First World War

There will be three major events on the opening day of the centenary on 4 August 2014:

- a wreath-laying service at Glasgow’s Cenotaph following a special service for Commonwealth leaders at Glasgow Cathedral. This follows on from the Commonwealth Games which finish on 3 August 2014.
- an event at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission St Symphorien Military Cemetery in Mons, Belgium – which has an equal number of British and German soldiers, and is where the first and last Commonwealth casualties of the war are believed to be buried.
- a candlelit vigil of prayer and penitence at Westminster Abbey finishing at 11pm – the moment war was declared.

On 5 August 2015 there is to be a Solemn Commemorative Service at Westminster Abbey, the details of which are to be announced later.

The centrepiece of the commemorations will be the reopening of the Imperial War Museum (IWM) London following the £35 million refurbishment of the First World War galleries. The IWM London was founded in 1917 to record the then still-continuing conflict.

The new refurbished Imperial War Museum London
Over the next ten years, the IWM London is to be refurbished, which will result in new galleries and areas for visitors to explore their collections.

The first phase of this ambitious project will be open in the summer of 2014, with the opening of the new First World War Galleries, which will be the IWM’s contribution to the Centenary of the First World War. Using the latest technology along with the latest historical research, visitors will be able to gain new insights and hear new stories about the First World War.

There are to be other activities in the four-year programme which include:

- Acts of remembrance to mark the first day of the Battle of the Somme (1 July 2016) and Armistice Day (11 November 2018)
- The Department for Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government have provided £5.3 million, which will allow 2 children, plus a teacher, from each school in England to visit First World War battlefields and to report back to the school with details of their trip.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund will provide at least £15 million, including a new £6 million community project fund to enable young people working in their communities to conserve, explore and share local knowledge of the First World War.
Daily Act of Remembrance: 
Last Post & Reveille

The National Memorial Arboretum is located in the centre of England at Alrewas, near Lichfield, Staffordshire and is the place “Where our Nation Remembers”. The Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness is situated close to the Visitor Centre and is the only place in the country where the Act of Remembrance is observed daily at 11 am.

The National Memorial Arboretum is open daily (except Christmas Day) from 9am until 5pm, although it closes at dusk in winter months. Admission is free although there is a parking charge at the National Memorial Arboretum for cars (maximum £3.00 per day) - all parking fees go directly to the NMA charity.

There is an on-going project where you are invited to dedicate an engraved paving stone to be laid in the new Heroes’ Square, opening in 2015. For further details see the National Memorial Arboretum website at: www.thenma.org.uk/

Picture Courtesy of Joanna Legg at www.greatwar.co.uk

Ideas

- Light a light on the First World War Centenary wall to show your support on www.1914.org/

- Hold a vigil on 4 August and at 11.00pm extinguish the candles to commemorate those words said by Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary of the time: "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our time". It is hoped that such services will be held all over the country. Could local churches or deaneries come together to hold such a service?

- Make a special display and include a place to light a light in your churches for those to commemorate those who died in WW1.

- Join with other groups in your parishes and hold an exhibition to include family stories, photographs; have you got a WW1 kit or uniform?

- Faces of the First World War - help uncover the life stories behind some of those in your parishes whose names are on the war memorials in your churchyards.

- Look at and learn about your local War Memorials to see whose names are on them and try to discover something about those people and encourage your local schools to do the same, by looking at www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/ and www.bbc.co.uk/schools/worldwarone/

- Discover where those on your war memorials are buried overseas - The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is a good place to start www.cwgc.org/
- Have you got all the names of those who died on your war memorial, or are some missing?

- Village halls sometimes have war memorials - are the people mentioned on it, the same as those on the parish war memorial?

- Some places have Rolls of Honour which shows people who participated in the war, not only those who gave their lives.

- Find your grandfather’s will - www.gov.uk/probate-search

- Trace any Conscientious Objectors local to your parish

- Is there something in your registers about the war memorial - do you need to get them or anything else out of the archives for your community to see?

- Hold an afternoon tea for the older people using poppy seeds – using the HOPE 2014 grants available to all churches.
  
  o Poppy seed brioche with raspberry jam
  o Shortbread with poppy seeds
  o Raspberry mousse macaron
  o Chocolate praline and almond biscuit with chocolate poppy flower
  o Lemon tart with chocolate poppy flower
  o An assortment of sandwiches

- Have an exhibition to include art, embroidery and poetry to commemorate the Great War. This picture of poppies is a stencil freely available on the internet!

- Look at the issues the Great War raises like salvation, forgiveness etc…

- Make a poppy garden inviting people to add their face, to the poppy when they place it in the ‘poppy field’ to show that they are praying for peace or to add a picture / name of a loved one that died in WW1 (or in conflict since).

- Ask the older people in your parishes, for their memories of the stories their parents told them about the war.

- HOPE Together is an excellent resource site www.hopetogether.org.uk/

- Sign up to www.damaris.org.uk/ to receive notification of film clips which can be shown and discussed in small groups or church services

- Have an evening or two to discuss various books connected with WW1, such as Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks, War Horse or Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo

- Podcasts - the Imperial War Museum has some on its website -
Keep up to date with what is happening by looking at www.great-war.co.uk/

Drive part of the Remembrance Trail in the Somme – that is part of the commemorations of the Centenary of the First World War by the Somme County Council. To find out more visit www.somme-battlefields.com/battlefields/discover_the_circuit_of_remembrance or www.somme14-18.com

To find out more about the battles in northern France visit www.remembrancetrails-northernfrance.com/

Visit the Stanley Spencer ‘Heaven in a Hell of a War’ at Somer- set House London WC2 from 7 November – 26 January 2014 www.somersethouse.org.uk

Church House Bookshop has some excellent books on creative ideas for Remembrance services which use experiences of those who have been in war www.chbookshop.co.uk/books

Church House is working on a WW1 webpage to keep everything together in one place and the Liturgical Commission will be producing prayers and services.

Bible Society are creating a commemorative booklet of psalms, prayers and poems - www.biblesociety.org.uk

The 2014 Real Poppy Campaign

To mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, the 2014 Real Poppy Campaign is inviting people to purchase packs of poppy seeds and sow them wherever they can to carpet the country in a sea of red. The campaign is being run by the Royal British Legion in conjunction with the Imperial War Museum and forms part of the First World War Centenary Partnership. Packs start from as little as £2.99 including free postage & packing. All profits from the sale of seeds purchased through the campaign are going to the Royal British Legion.

To help ensure a national coverage, members of the RBL Riders Branch have agreed to assist in the casting of poppy seeds on your behalf if you are unable to do so yourself.

You can choose to buy approx. 1000, 5000 or 10000 seeds at a time, a flowering success rate of around 85% is estimated if correctly cast/planted. The seeds can be wild cast anywhere, they will usually grow untended and need no gardening skills. Full instructions are provided with every pack of seeds.

Pack of approx. 1000 seeds £2.99 Free P&P
Pack of approx. 5000 seeds £5.99 Free P&P
Pack of approx. 10000 seeds £9.99 Free P&P
Payment by PayPal, credit/debit card and cheque is available.

Just imagine...the entire nation covered in bright red poppies!

Every road, motorway, roundabout, hedgerow, field (do not use near agricultural areas or sites of scientific interest’), verge - the gardens and window boxes of thousands of homes - just one poppy seed can produce 10-15 flowers - this means we should literally have millions of poppies flowering throughout the land!
By doing this simple thing we are certainly saying:

‘We Will Remember Them’

For more details and to order your poppy seeds please visit the website at http://realpoppy.co.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the World War 1 Commemorations

Every village and town has its own war memorial with the names of those parishioners who did not return from the fighting. There is money available to help communities to commemorate WW1 in some way or other and bids can be made for grants of between £3,000 to £10,000 to help explore, conserve and save First World War heritage. These grant programmes are for community projects that focus on the First World War, with a short application and quick decision. Look at this website for more information on how to apply for a grant - www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/FirstWorldWarThenandNow.aspx#.UkxKZMJwZhE

www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/whatwefund/FirstWorldWar/Documents/Remembering_FWW_leaflet.pdf
www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/whatwefund/firstworldwar/Pages/Grants3-10.aspx#.UkxKZMJwZhE
**BBC working with IWM on ‘World War One At Home’**

The BBC and the Imperial War Museum are linking together to bring ‘World War One At Home’, original wartime accounts, to life. There will be stories about our neighbourhoods where the wounded were treated, major scientific developments happened, prisoners of war were held and where heroes are buried. 1400 stories that have never been heard before – 100 stories from each of the eleven BBC regions – will be broadcast as well as being online, and the BBC iPlayer will have a new channel dedicated to World War 1.

Various projects by the BBC will stretch over a 4 year period and to find out more about ‘World War One At Home’ and the rest of the BBC’s Centenary season go to www.bbc.co.uk/ww1

**Did you know…?**

- The idea of burying the fallen of World War 1 in the country where they had died was an idea of Sir Fabian Ware. He thought that would result in equal treatment of soldiers and officers alike, as there would be no distinction between rich and poor – those who could afford to bring their loved ones home, and those who couldn’t. By 1923, 4,000 headstones, like we see today all hand carved and identical in size and shape irrespective of the dead soldier’s rank, were being shipped every week to France. This continued up until the outbreak of the second World War in 1939 – making at least 3,328,000 headstones.

- The Holocaust is now being remembered in Berlin, Germany. Guenther Demnig, a 62-year-old Berlin-born artist is installing dozens of small brass bricks, each with the name and details of a person’s death outside the house where they lived. This project has been gradually increasing in size until now there are more than 30,000 commemorative bricks in numerous towns and cities across Germany. They have been given the name ‘Stumbling Blocks’. For more information, go to - www.npr.org/2012/05/31/153943491/stumbling-upon-miniature-memorials-to-nazi-victims

- There is a dedicated website and a special logos to mark 100th anniversary of First World War that parishes may like to use to show they are marking the commemoration but they need to sign up for permission to use it! Go to - www.gov.uk/government/news/dedicated-website-and-logo-to-mark-100th-anniversary-of-first-world-war

- There are some villages where all those who volunteered for service in the 1st World War returned home alive. These villages in England and Wales are known as ‘Thankful Villages’ or ‘Blessed Villages’. The term ‘Thankful Village’ was mentioned in 1936 by the writer Arthur Mee in his book ‘Enchanted Land’, the introductory volume to The King’s England series of guides. He said that a ‘Thankful Village’ was one which had lost no men in the First World War and his list identified 32 villages. In Kent, Knowlton, near Dover, is a ‘Thankful Village’, in that it
did not lose anyone in World War I. Knowlton was given the title of the ‘Bravest Village in the United Kingdom’ in a competition organised by the Weekly Dispatch in 1914 for sending the biggest percentage of its population to the war, as 12 men joined up out of a total population of only 39. The 17 ft. high memorial cross given by the Weekly Dispatch to mark the Bravest Village still stands.

- The poppy is our flower of remembrance but the cornflower is the flower of remembrance for the French. As the poppy grew in terrible conditions, so did the cornflower – in the trenches as well as in what was left of the fields. Both flowers reminded the troops that there was life away from the battlefield.

SGM LIFEWORDS

‘In August 2014 the world will mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Men enlisted, or were called up, in their millions, being sent to fight in places that many had never heard of before. It was a global struggle. Life changed forever. Nothing was ever the same again.’

(Imperial War Museum Website)

In this time of national turmoil, Scripture Gift Mission embarked upon one of its biggest challenges - pledging that every serviceman should have access to the words of the Bible. During the war they provided over 43 million Gospels and New Testaments to troops. Each copy had a commendation from Lord Roberts, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, well-known hymns with which chaplains led services in the trenches, and a decision form where the owner could record their commitment to Christ. These pocket-sized Gospels were given out as men passed from training camps on their way to the front, and were carried to the trenches.

From reviewing some of the letters received at the time, and even from contemporary comment, SGM Lifewords, know just how important these gospels were. During the war SGM received many reports of those decision cards being returned with soldiers’ possessions, dated just days or hours before they were killed in action.

“My grandmother gave my grandfather a small Bible when he was leaving Australia in 1918 for WW1. Inside the Bible is Lord Roberts’ message ... The little Bible was taken to and from the war with each location written inside. He treasured it all his life”.

(Anonymous)

To mark the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the "war to end all wars", there will be many acts of remembrance taking place throughout the country – special events in schools, community commemorations, and civic services. And SGM Lifewords would like to play its part in the remembrance, just as it did in the original conflict.
Will you help them create and distribute a replica edition of the service Gospel to be given out at events for this special anniversary? Now, as then, they would dearly love for everyone in this country to have access to the life words of the Bible. Commemorative events will be solemn occasions - and they would like to offer people the chance to reflect seriously on the words of the Gospel, as the nation pauses and remembers the horror that still lay ahead in 1914. Their replica edition will resemble an original 1914 booklet, with a facsimile of the original cover, and will tell the story of how the Bible brought hope and comfort as men carried it in their pockets, and read it on the battlefields. The booklet will contain the words of John's gospel in a version accessible in today's culture, just as the original text was familiar to those young men going off to fight.

They are partnering with HOPE (http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/), which is helping churches across the country take part in a "year of mission" in 2014. Together they would like to resource churches to share the Gospel in an appropriate way around the WWI commemorations. Perhaps your church or local school is partnering with HOPE already, or will be taking part in a commemoration service? Perhaps you could even suggest or organise an event? Whatever is happening, could you volunteer to provide Bible booklets for those taking part?

PS If you have copies of an Active Service Gospel or other World War 1 material, they would love to see them or add them to the SGM Life-words archive - http://www.sgmlifewords.com/uk