

Mike's message

Flowers of Remembrance

November brings with it the time of Remembrance. It's especially poignant this year as it is a significant anniversary. Mid-way through four years of commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War, there has been a particular focus this year on the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

As part of the commemorations, and specifically for this season of Remembrance, the Royal British Legion have produced a special pin badge. Above the words 'Somme 100' are two flowers; a red Poppy and a blue Cornflower.

The story of the Poppy is well known in this country. On fields once the scene of slaughter, blown apart by shells, it was poppies that were the first flowers to grow. The red Poppy is a symbol of Remembrance in Britain and across much of the Commonwealth.

In France though it is the Cornflower that is the flower of solidarity and remembrance. Cornflowers, or Les Bleuets, are particularly appropriate this year as it was in 1916 that the French Army adopted an 'horizon blue' uniform for their troops replacing one with very vivid, and very easily seen, bright red trousers. It was also in 1916, much earlier than the Poppy, that Les Bleuets were adopted as symbols of remembrance. This poem dates from that time:

*Les voici les p'tits « Bleuets »
Les Bleuets couleur des cieux
Ils vont jolis, gais et coquets,
Car ils n'ont pas froid aux yeux.
En avant partez joyeux ;
Partez, amis, au revoir !
Salut à vous, les petits « bleus »,
Petits « bleuets », vous notre espoir ! »*

These here, these little "Bleuets"
These Bleuets the colour of the sky,
Are beautiful, gay, stylish,
Because they are not afraid.
Merrily, go forward
Go on, my friends, so long!
Good luck for you, little "blues"
Little "bleuets," you are our hope!

Alphonse Bourgin, from 'Bleuets de France', 1916

This Remembrance 'tide let us remember all those who have died in war from all nations, faiths and races. Let us pray for those caught up in conflict today and remember to pray for our enemies too.

