

November 2017's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion topic is about Armistice Day



Armistice Day is commemorated every year on 11 November. It marks the armistice signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany at Compiegne, France to end World War 1 on the Western Front. It took effect at eleven o'clock in the morning—the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918. The date was declared a national holiday in many allied nations, and coincides with Remembrance Day and Veterans Day.

The first Armistice Day was held at Buckingham Palace; the first official Armistice Day events were subsequently held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace on the morning of 11 November 1919. This would set the trend for a day of Remembrance for decades to come.

In 1919, South African Sir Percy Fitzpatrick proposed a two-minute silence to Lord Milner. This had been a daily practice in Cape Town from April 1918 onward and has been adopted throughout the British Commonwealth. People observe a one or more commonly a two-minute moment of silence at 11:00 a.m. local time. It is a sign of respect - the first minute honours the memory of the approximately 20 million people who died in the war; the second minute is dedicated to the living left behind, generally understood to be wives, children and families left behind but deeply affected by the conflict.

In Britain, beginning in 1939, the two-minute silence was moved to the Sunday nearest to 11 November in order not to interfere with wartime production should 11 November fall on a weekday. After the end of World War II, most member states of the Commonwealth of Nations, like United Kingdom, moved most Armistice Day events to the nearest Sunday and officially began to commemorate both World Wars. They adopted the name Remembrance Day or Remembrance Sunday. Other countries also changed the name of the holiday just prior to or after World War II, to honor veterans of that and subsequent conflicts. The United States chose All Veterans Day, later shortened to 'Veterans Day', to explicitly honor military veterans, including those participating in other conflicts.

National Independence Day is a public holiday in Poland celebrated on 11 November to commemorate the anniversary of the restoration of Poland's sovereignty as the Second Polish Republic in 1918, after 123 years of partition by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Habsburg Empire. "Armistice Day" remains the name of the holiday in France and Belgium, and it has been a statutory holiday in Serbia since 2012. In Italy the end of World War I is commemorated on 4 November, the day of the Armistice of Villa Giusti.

Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae (no links to our McCrae Lane!) wrote "In Flanders Fields" following the death of a close friend in battle, dying amongst the poppy fields. Sadly, John McCrae did not survive WW1.

**In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.**

**We are the dead: Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved: and now we lie
In Flanders fields!**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields**

*Composed at the battlefield on May 3, 1915
during the second battle of Ypres, Belgium*

At SHS, we no longer have any tenants that would have fought in WW1; however, we do have 229 tenants that were born between 1917 & 1945, they are likely to have been directly impacted by WW2; 42 tenants were old enough to serve in the armed forces or the women's land army during WW2.